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EDITOR'S LETTER

In this issue we ask some of Britain's head gardeners and plantspeople about their favourite gardens to visit, seeking to find those places beyond the crowds and the obvious. Where do the people who work in fantastic gardens daily go to see brilliance in planting or cutting-edge garden design? From a flower garden with a contemporary twist in Devon to a maximalist garden that is isn't shy about being big on scale or texture in Cheshire, to a tiny garden with 50 different species of fern in London, all are open to visitors, but only on select dates each year. Notable too, are gardens designed by Jinny Blom, Arne Maynard and Tom Stuart-Smith in private ownership that are usually kept behind closed gates.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of Anna Pavord's magnum opus *The Tulip*. Tulips are flowers that continue to excite; the ephemeral, colourful markers of spring. While little can rival the colours of modern hybrid tulips, many of the wild species and their cultivars offer a more refined and perennial display.

There is a growing appreciation for the diminutive ancestors of the modern flowers. Previously dismissed as difficult to grow, species tulips are rewarding pot specimens, and will grow well in gravel gardens, rock gardens or the cracks of a path. Just one or two bulbs will increase in number year on year and perform better for the benefit of a long, hot summer. Watching a clump slowly increase makes them feel precious and valuable, making the disposable nature of modern tulip bulb planting feel a little at odds.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

MARIANNE MAJERUS

The gardens of Hotel Endsleigh in Devon are among our recommended hidden gems to visit, page 84.

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Benjamin William Pope shows how to use polyanthus to great effect in his new container-planting series, page 58.

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COVER IMAGE

Tulipa x *gesneriana*
by Richard Bloom

ON THE COVER

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EVENTS AND OFFERS

- Join us on two expert-guided tours: to Cornwall's great gardens in April, and to some of the most beautiful rose gardens in the southeast of England in June – page 8
- Enjoy a behind-the-scenes look at what goes into creating a Chelsea show garden on our reader day to growers Hortus Loci – page 11
- Save money when you take out a digital subscription to *Gardens Illustrated** – page 32
- *Gardens Illustrated* subscribers get free p&p when they pre-order the new *Pots of Style* special edition – page 107
- Save 15 per cent on raspberry canes and strawberry plants from Pomona Fruits[†] – page 113

[†] Reader offer open to mainland UK residents only.

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ANDREW MONTGOMERY

BENJAMIN WILLIAM POPE
Benjamin starts a new pots-of-style series, page 58. *"Displaying plants in pots and containers allows for a creative response to a particular plant or season."*

NICOLA STOCKEN
Nicola shot our muscari feature, page 64. *"I love that this collection shows muscari in planting combinations and raised beds, highlighting different cultivars."*

SEAN MALYON

ALYS HURN
Alys compiled our gardens-to-visit feature, page 84. *"Every garden is exceptional in its own way, but they all deliver on inspiring planting and innovative design."*

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JAMES BASSON
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

FERGUS GARRETT
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student and volunteer programmes at Dixter and through worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008.

ANNA PAVORD
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

DAN PEARSON
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

SARAH PRICE
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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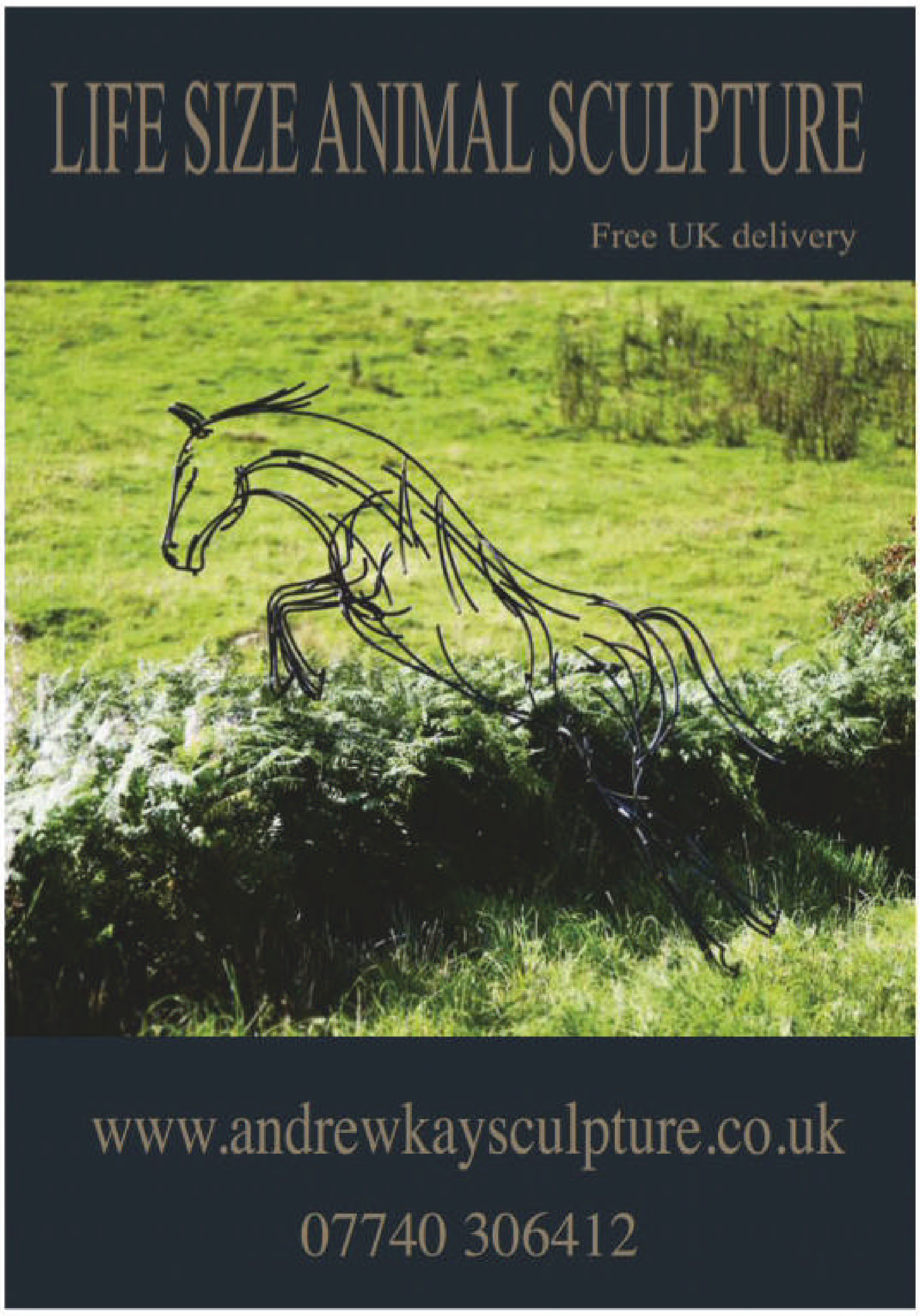

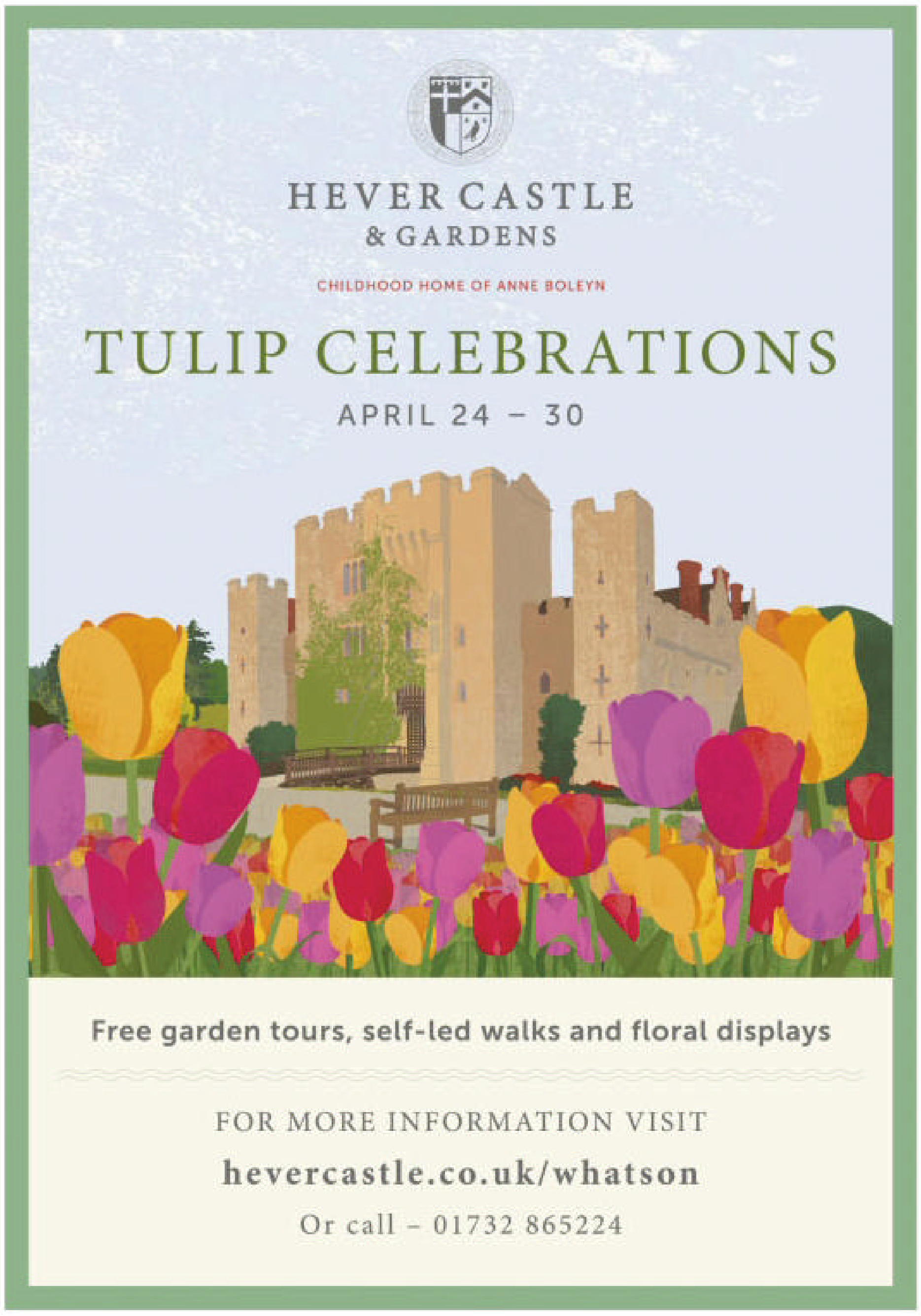
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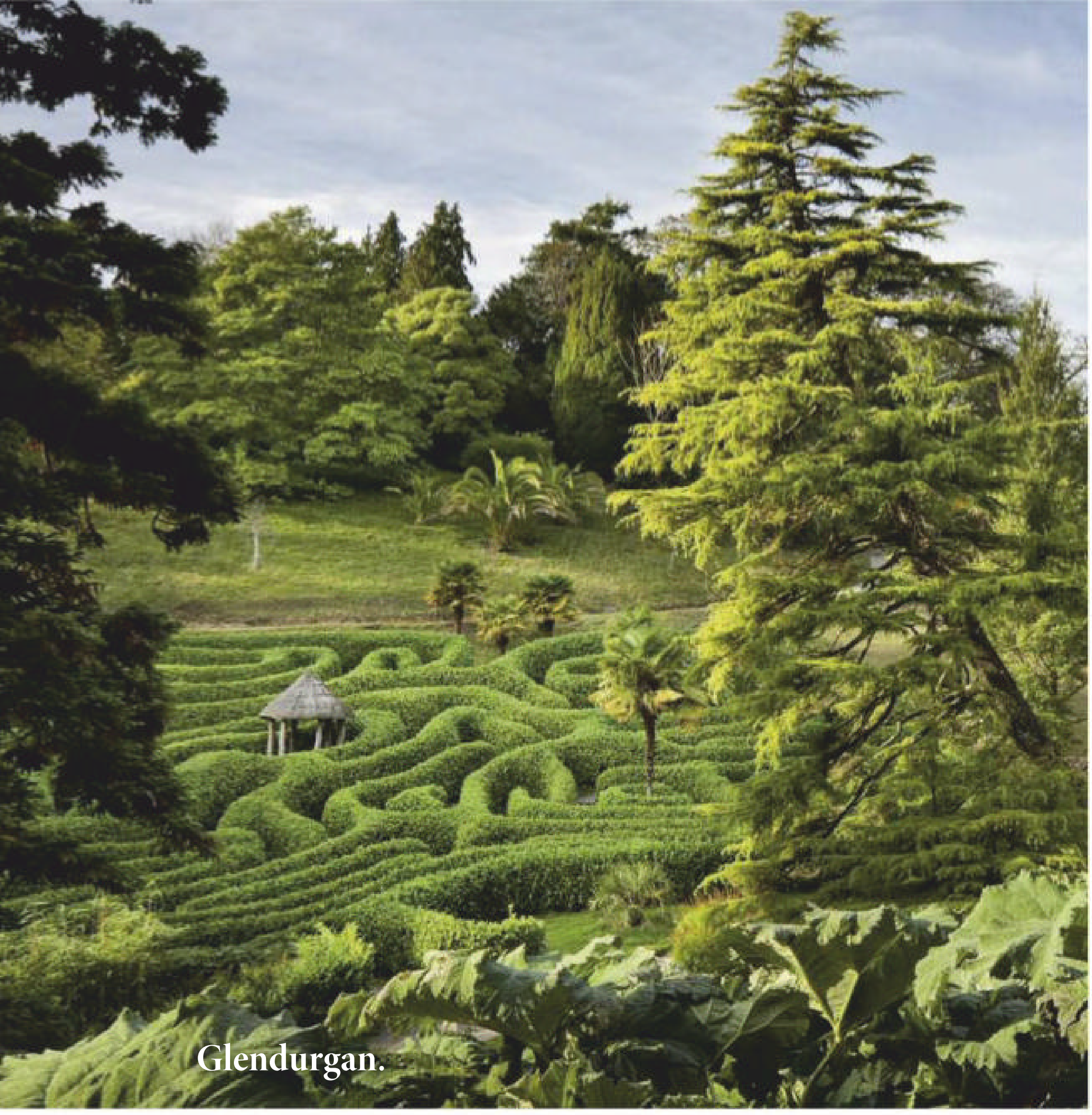
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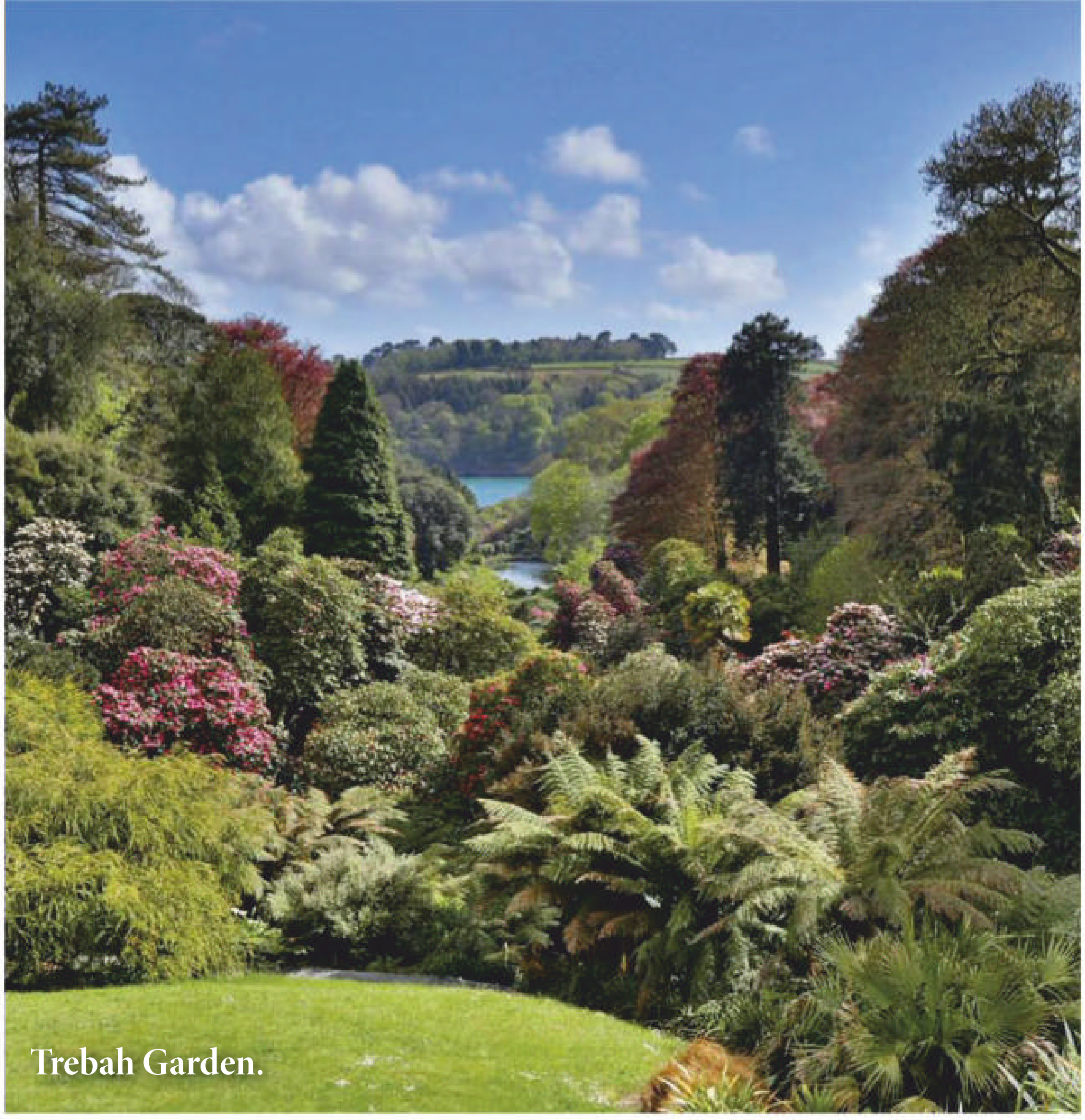
Trebah Garden.

9-12 APRIL 2019

CORNISH SPRING GARDENS

Spring comes early to the UK's southwest peninsula. Celebrate the season by immersing yourself in the beauty of these outstanding, coastal valley gardens

TOUR LEADER

Annie Guilfoyle is a regular *Gardens Illustrated* contributor, and an award-winning designer, writer, lecturer and international garden show judge. She will be accompanied by expert garden tour leader, Dr Sophie Piebenga.

The Cornish peninsula is famous for its sheltered gardens harbouring important collections of magnolias, camellias, rhododendrons, palms, tree ferns and many other exotic plant groups that predominantly flower in the spring. Most of these gardens are found on Cornwall's south coast where valley gardens lead down to secluded creeks warmed by the Gulf Stream to give unique microclimates. Our four-day tour allows you to discover the magnificence of some of Cornwall's finest gardens including **Tregrehan**, **Caerhays**, **Trewithen** and **Tregothnan**. We'll also be joined for a day by garden designer **Charles Fox** whose influential shipping merchant family was responsible for the creation in the 19th century of the gardens at **Glendurgan**, **Penjerrick** and **Trebah**, and he'll talk about the gardens' fascinating histories over lunch at Glendurgan. We'll stay at Olga Polizzi's boutique **Tresanton Hotel**, a haven of peace and beauty where guests enjoy comfort and style, fresh local cuisine and traditional, unobtrusive service. All rooms have stunning views across the sea towards St Anthony's Lighthouse with the opportunity to stroll into St Mawes, one of Cornwall's prettiest fishing villages.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing: £2,295 (a single supplement of £450 is levied by the hotel).

Price includes: three nights dinner, bed and breakfast at Tresanton Hotel, St Mawes; three delicious evening meals with wines at the hotel; three lunches, including a special invitation to lunch at Glendurgan with Charles Fox; and all transportation from St Austell railway station or the hotel. The price does not include hotel extras or travel insurance.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT

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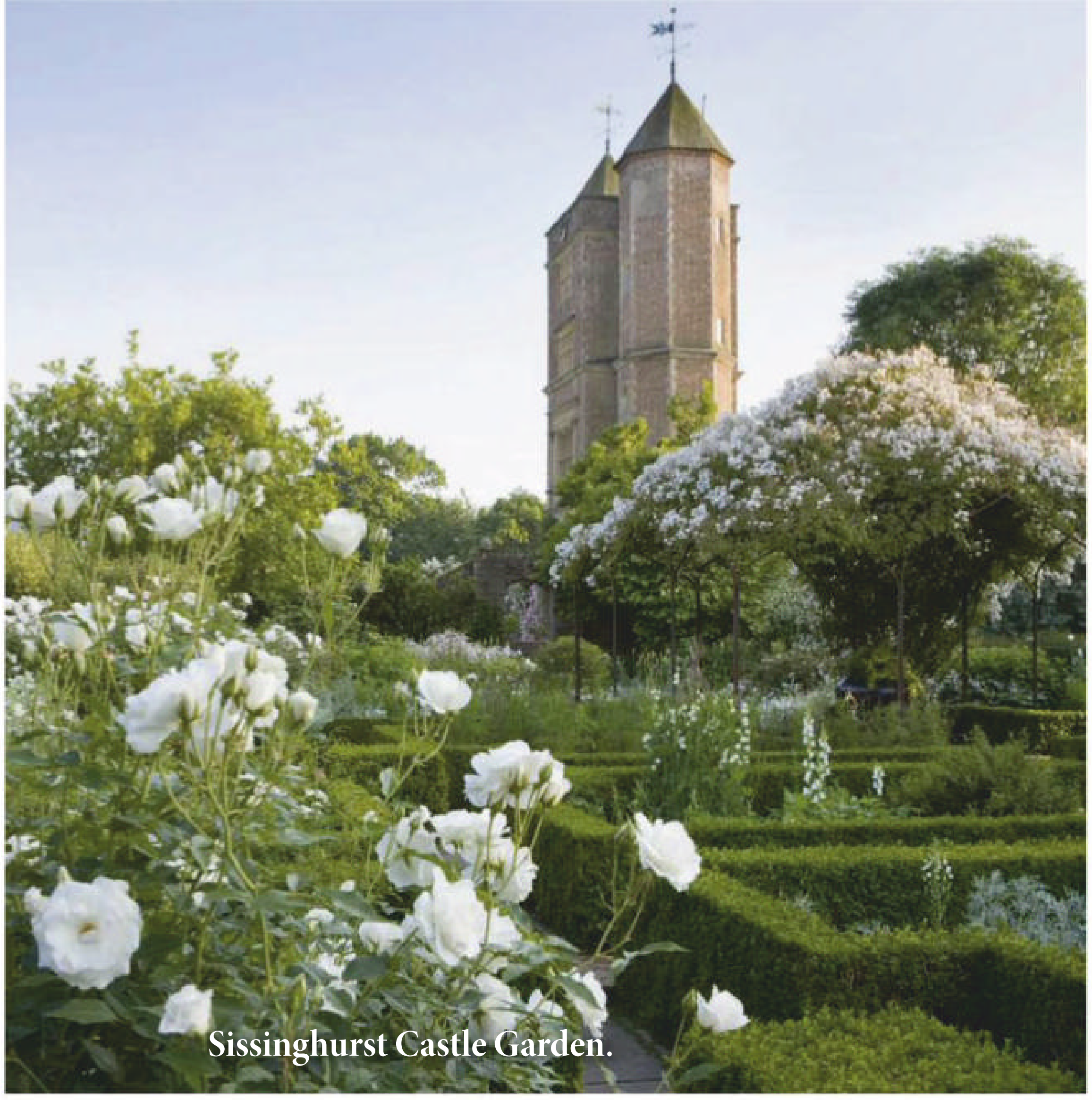

Sissinghurst Castle Garden.

Mottisfont Abbey.

11-14 JUNE 2019

THE ENGLISH ROSE TOUR

Rose enthusiasts are invited to join us on the *Gardens Illustrated* tour in celebration of the rose – from Sissinghurst Castle to Mottisfont Abbey

Following our highly successful first Rose Tour in 2018 with rose expert Michael Marriott on his home patch in Shropshire, we now venture to southern England on a gentle journey to enjoy more roses in some wonderful gardens. Visits feature classic gardens, such as **Sissinghurst Castle**, **Mottisfont Abbey**, **Nymans** and **Pashley Manor**, as well as a selection of exceptional private gardens, including **Town Place** with its 600 or so roses, **Clinton Lodge** where you'll find old roses all trained at nose height for maximum opportunity to appreciate scent, **Frankham Manor** with its all-pink rose garden and **Redenham Park**, where roses form a key part of the rich tapestry of planting.

If you love the perfume of roses on an early summer's day and have always promised yourself time to discover more about this vast and varied genus, then this is the tour for you. Stroll from rose to rose discussing the merits of under-planting, mulching, pruning, budding, training, and indeed even the name of the rose, in the company of Michael, who will once again add insight and unbounded enthusiasm for these quintessential garden blooms.

TOUR LEADER

Michael Marriott has worked at David Austin Roses, designing and advising, for the past 30 years. He is an expert on all matters relating to roses, from the extensive range of cultivars and types to successful growing.

BOOKING DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing is £2,290 (a single supplement of £150 is levied by the hotel).

The price includes: bed and breakfast accommodation at Ockenden Manor Hotel; three evening meals with wines at the hotel plus four lunches; all transportation from Haywards Heath railway station or from the hotel. The price does not include extras or travel insurance. Please note that Boxwood Tours use hotels of character featuring a variety of rooms and styles.

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THE SPEAKERS

Mark Gregory is a 21-times gold medal winner at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, including his win in 2018 as People's Choice with his evocative Welcome to Yorkshire garden. He is returning in 2019 with another garden for the same sponsor.

Ann-Marie Powell is a Chelsea regular, both as a designer (she designed the RHS Greening Grey Britain garden in 2016) and as a presenter for the BBC. She is currently designing two new garden areas at RHS Garden Wisley.

Tamara Bridge won RHS Young Designer of the Year in 2015 at Tatton Park. She has since appeared twice at Chelsea, with a BBC Radio 2 Feel Good garden in 2017, and a garden for Warner Edwards in 2018. For 2019 she is joining Tom Dixon to create the IKEA garden in the Great Pavilion.

Mark Straver and Robin Wallis set up Hortus Loci in 2011. The nursery has become known for its expertise in sourcing a wide range of plants from around the world and working with designers to supply plants for their show gardens, including Mark and Tamara this year.

Mark Gregory's Welcome to Yorkshire garden won Gold and the People's Choice award at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2018.

FRIDAY 26 APRIL 2019

HORTUS LOCI CHELSEA PLANT PREVIEW

Join us for a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the 2019 RHS Chelsea Flower Show with designers Mark Gregory and Tamara Bridge in conversation with Ann-Marie Powell and plant growers Hortus Loci

If you're a regular visitor to the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, you'll be aware of the quality and quantity of plants that fill all the show gardens. But have you ever wondered how the designers make their selection before they play their starring roles at the show? Our reader day at growers Hortus Loci aims to give you an insight. Working in close partnership with designers, Hortus Loci begins the growing and sourcing of plants as much as a year before the show, reaching a frenzy of logistics once the garden builds begin in early May. You'll get a sneak peek at what's likely to be this year's must-have plant, as well as an insight into the likely trends at Chelsea. Nurserymen **Mark Straver** and **Robin Wallis** will talk about how the plants are selected and grown with a tour of the behind-the-scenes beds and polytunnels, and then following lunch, designers **Mark Gregory** and **Tamara Bridge** will talk with **Ann-Marie Powell** about their highly anticipated Chelsea gardens for 2019, their choice of plants and how their designs are progressing from concept to nerve-wracking completion. Your day also includes time to browse the nursery and make your own plant selections with a special £5 discount voucher.

ELLEN ROONEY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

EVENT DETAILS

Price £85 per person, including lunch and refreshments.

Date Friday 26 April, 2019.
Venue The Plant Centre, Hortus Loci,
Hound Green, Hook, Hampshire RG27 8LQ.
Programme
10am Arrival, coffee and cake.
10.30am Guided tour of the nursery and the Chelsea plant stock beds.
12 noon Lunch provided by on-site Hobo.co Artisan Café and Kitchen.
1.30pm Mark Gregory and Tamara Bridge in conversation with Ann-Marie Powell.
For the rest of the afternoon you are free to explore the nursery and buy plants with your special £5 discount voucher.

You can also sign up on the day for a loyalty card entitling you to a 10 per cent discount for further purchases at The Plant Centre Hortus Loci.

Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Booking is essential. Please advise us of any dietary or accessibility requirements.

TO BOOK

Online gardensillustrated.com/events
Telephone 0871 230 7156†.

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†Calls to this number from a BT landline will cost 13p per minute plus network extras. Call from mobiles and other providers may vary. Overseas readers should call +44 115 896 0368.
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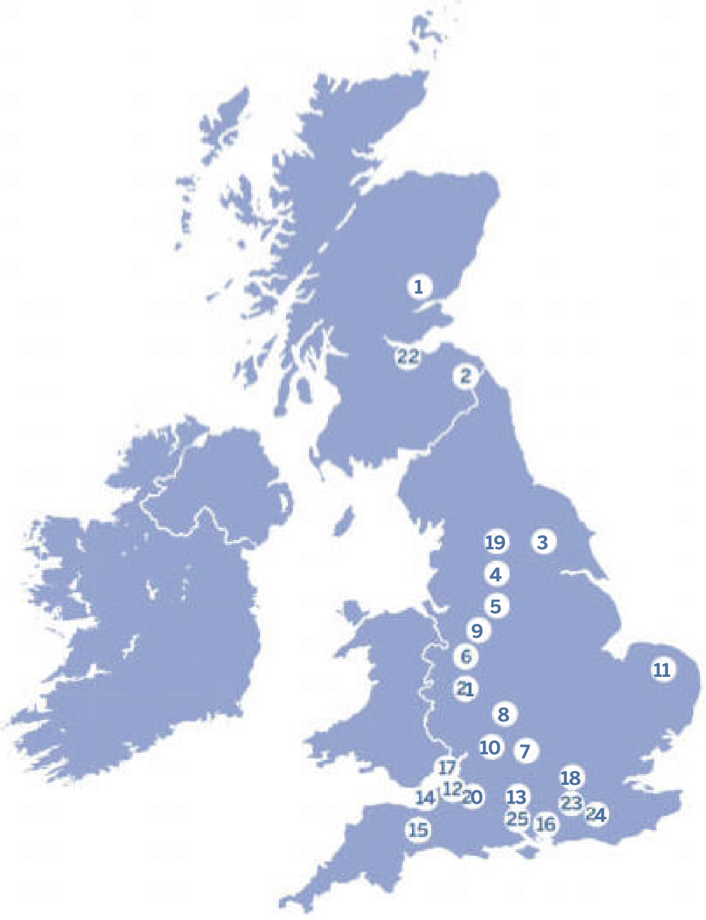

2019 workshop dates and venues: *unless noted all days run from 10am–4.30pm.*

THURSDAY 4 APRIL £45 5.30PM
Yeo Valley Organic Gardens, Somerset (14)
Garden visit with supper and film screening of 'Five Seasons – The gardens of Piet Oudolf'

WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL £140
Yeo Valley Organic Gardens, Somerset (14)
Plants Grow in Dirt with Bob Brown and a propagation workshop with Andi Strachan

WEDNESDAY 1 MAY £130
Trentham Gardens, Staffordshire (6)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury

WEDNESDAY 1 MAY £140
The Coach House, Gloucestershire (10)
Working a Concept through to Completion – a garden design workshop with Annie Guilfoyle

TUESDAY 28 & WEDNESDAY 29 MAY €300
*please note Euros
Col de la Gineste & Mèze, Southern France
Lessons in the Landscape – a two-day workshop with Helen & James Basson & Olivier Filippi

WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE £160 ▦
Thenford Arboretum, Northamptonshire (8)
Choosing Trees with John Grimshaw

TUESDAY 18 JUNE £140 ▦
Chatsworth Gardens, Derbyshire (9)
Beauty and Biodiversity, Water and Well-Being: Integrating Art and Ecology for Sustainable Gardens with Dr Nigel Dunnett

THURSDAY 20 JUNE £160 SOLD OUT
Hillside Gardens, Somerset (17)
Keying into Context – identifying and enhancing sense of place with Dan Pearson

FRIDAY 21 JUNE £160 SOLD OUT
Hillside Gardens, Somerset (17)
Keying into Context – identifying and enhancing sense of place with Dan Pearson

TUESDAY 25 JUNE £140 ▦
East Ruston Old Vicarage Gardens, Norfolk (11)
An introduction to Roses with Michael Marriott

TUESDAY 2 JULY £140
Bury Court, Hampshire (13)
Gardens through the Lens – a photography workshop with Jason Ingram

WEDNESDAY 3 JULY €150 *please note Euros
Vlinderhof, Utrecht, Netherlands
Piet Oudolf's Planting Style – How does he do it? with Noel Kingsbury

FRIDAY 5 JULY £150 (10.30AM–5PM)
Forde Abbey, Dorset (15)
Working with the Meadow Aesthetic – designing and managing perennial meadows with Dr Nigel Dunnett & Joshua Sparkes

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY £140
Green and Gorgeous, Oxfordshire (7)
Growing Perennials as Cut Flowers with Rachel Siegfried

WEDNESDAY 10 JULY £25.00 6.30PM ▦
Sheffield Botanical Gardens, Yorkshire (5)
Film screening of 'Five Seasons – The gardens of Piet Oudolf'

THURSDAY 11 JULY £130 ▦
Sheffield Botanical Gardens, Yorkshire (5)
Sketch with Confidence – developing drawing skills for garden designers with Liz Ackerley

TUESDAY 23 JULY £140 ▦
Scampston Walled Garden, Yorkshire (3)
Plants for a Purpose – right plant, right place with Rosy Hardy

WEDNESDAY 21 AUGUST £130 ▦
Whitburgh House, Midlothian (22)
Planting Design and Contemporary Art with Elliott Forsyth

MONDAY 2 SEPTEMBER £140
Bury Court, Hampshire (13)
A Collaborative Approach to Design and Planting with Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER £140
Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex (16)
The Plantsman's Year – a guide to seasonal interest in the garden, along with a propagation workshop with Tom Brown & Marina Christopher

TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER £140 ▦
East Ruston Old Vicarage Gardens, Norfolk (11)
Designing with Colour with Nick Bailey

TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER £140
Stillingfleet Lodge, Yorkshire (4)
Lose your Fear of Pruning with Timothy Walker

WEDNESDAY 11 SEPTEMBER £140
Borde Hill, Surrey (23)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury

THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER £140
Wildegoose Nursery, Shropshire (21)
Gardens through the Lens – a photography workshop with Jason Ingram

FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER £140
Arvensis Perennials, Wiltshire (20)
Planting Design for the Public Realm – creating resilient and characterful planting for urban, public spaces with Giacomo Guzzon & Ton Muller

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER £140
Great Dixter, East Sussex (24)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury and Fergus Garrett

WEDNESDAY 25 SEPTEMBER £140 (11AM–6PM)
Yeo Valley Organic Gardens, Somerset (14)
The Ultimate Kitchen Garden with Mark Diacono & Lia Leendertz

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER £160
Iford Manor Gardens, Wiltshire (12)
Creative Containers for Seasonal Impact with Troy Scott-Smith

WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER £130
Alitex, Torberry Farm, Hampshire (25)
Growing Under Glass – edible and ornamentals with Sarah Wain

THURSDAY 3 OCTOBER £140
Wildegoose Nursery, Shropshire (21)
The Rabbit's Eye View – learning about long-term plant performance with Noel Kingsbury

THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER £140 (10.30AM–5PM)
Forde Abbey, Dorset (15)
Garden Evolution – a design workshop with Joshua Sparkes & Annie Guilfoyle

FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER £150
Horniman Museum, London (18)
Using Grasses and Perennials in the Modern Garden with Neil Lucas

MONDAY 14 OCTOBER £150
Beningbrough Hall Gallery & Gardens, Yorkshire (19) Contemporary Gardens in an Historic Setting – a design workshop with Andy Sturgeon

THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER £140
Adderstone House, Northumberland (2)
Developing the Garden Narrative – a garden design workshop with Annie Guilfoyle and Sean Murray

FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER £45 6.30PM
Hospitalfield, Arbroath (1)
Supper and film screening of 'Five Seasons – The gardens of Piet Oudolf'

SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER £150
Hospitalfield, Arbroath (1)
Beauty and Biodiversity, Water and Well-Being: Integrating Art and Ecology for Sustainable Gardens with Dr Nigel Dunnett

For booking and details of all workshops go to
gardenmasterclass.org
or email gardenmasterclass@gmail.com

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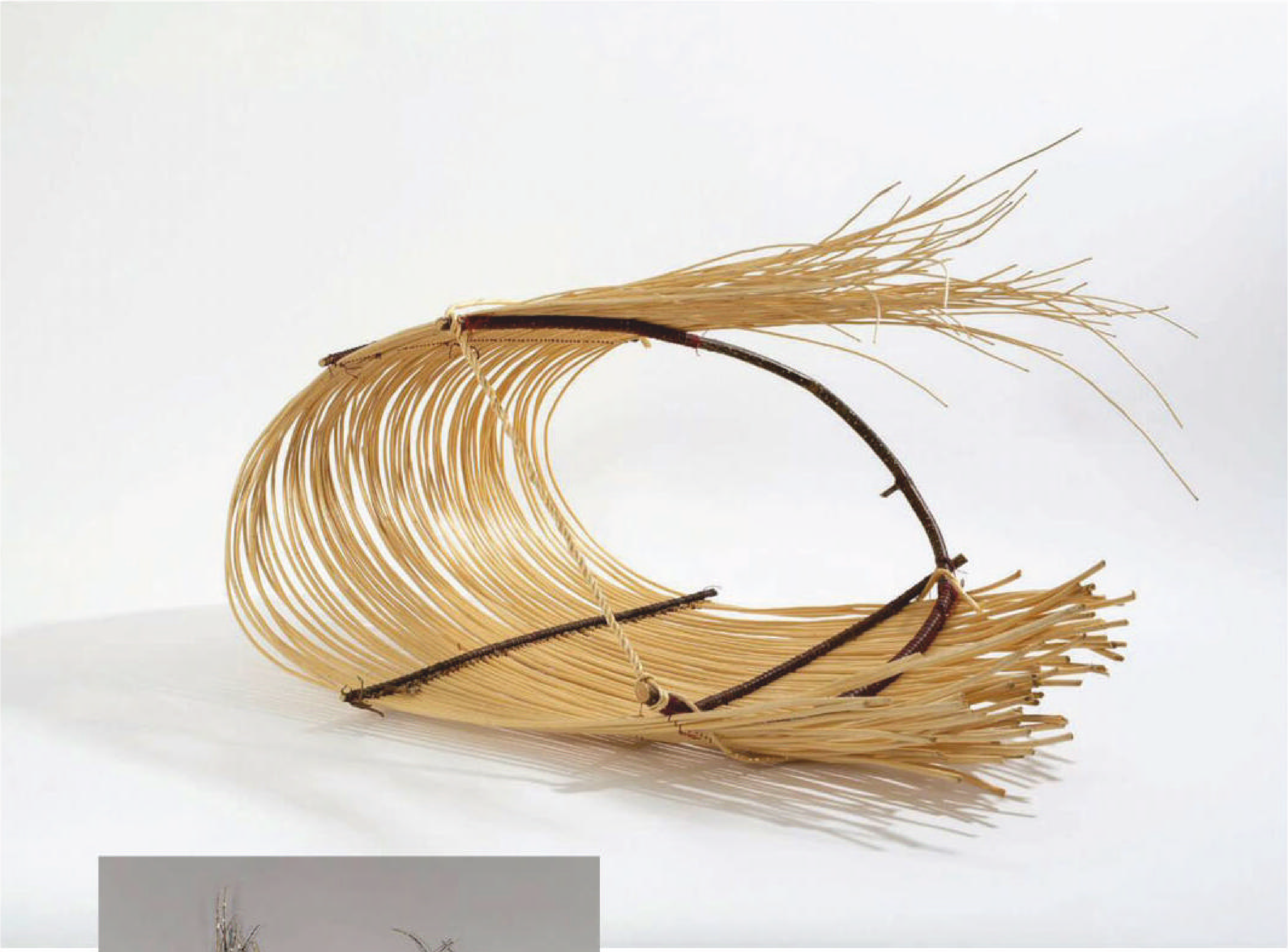
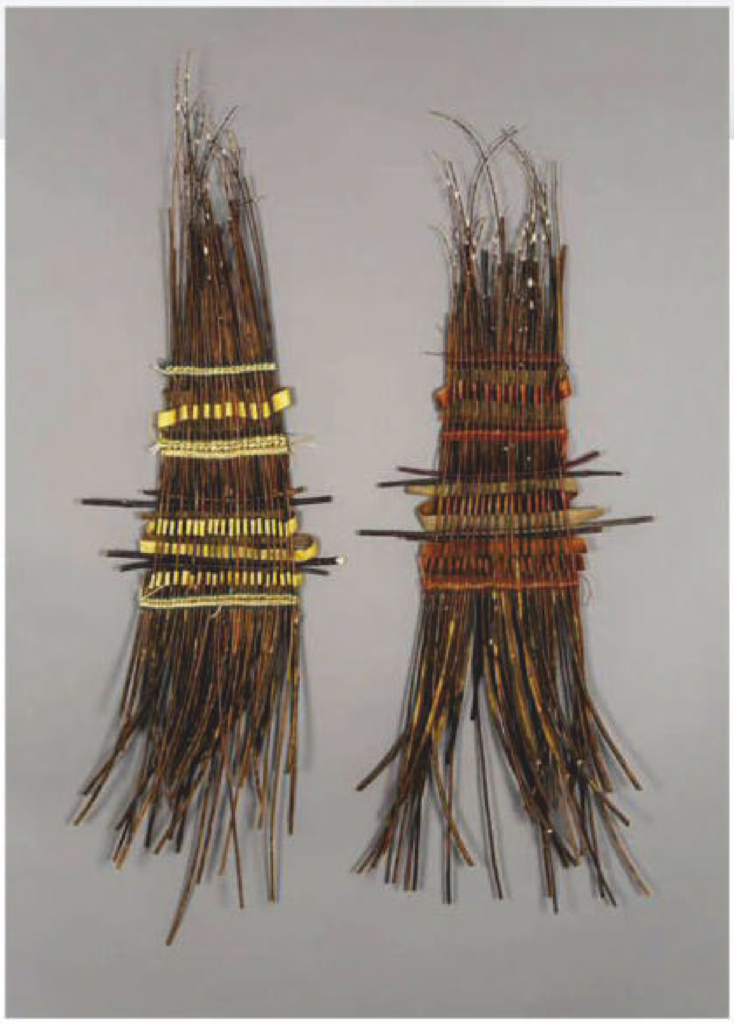
DIG IN

What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month





OLLIE HARROP

NATURAL FORM

Basket weaver and willow specialist Mary Butcher is fascinated by animal and plant forms, and the ways in which light travels through her work. Her latest solo show, *Line upon Line* at the Flow Gallery in London, features both functional baskets and sculptural objects, such as *Natural Line: The Light* (above), which uses a binding technique combining willow and linen thread. Her work makes use of a range of contemporary and traditional materials, including willow stems, as in her bark weavings (left), leaves, wire and vellum. 21 March – 25 May. **flowgallery.co.uk**

News

COMPILED BY ALYS HURN

CHANGING CLIMATES

The Royal Horticultural Society has appointed a new environmental horticulture team to research and advise on sustainable resource management, soil health and ecosystems. Headed by Mark Gush, the team joins the 60-strong science team based at RHS Garden Wisley, which will move into the new National Centre for Horticultural Science when it opens in 2020. The centre, with gardens by Matt Keightley (above) and Ann Marie-Powell (left) will house three new research laboratories, and a library and archive. To find out more, or to support fund raising for the centre visit **rhs.org.uk**

CLEAN FUN

Washing up would be much less of a chore if all tea towels were as stylish as this Dill design from Jekka McVicar's new homeware range. Designed by Jekka's artist daughter, Hannah McVicar, the range also includes mugs, coasters and aprons, available from Jekka's online shop along with herbs and gardening kit. The website also includes a new handy herb-finding tool, Jekkapedia, which offers expert growing advice on more than 400 herbs, many of which are available from the shop, and lets you search by use, hardiness or growing conditions. ***jekkas.com***

Home brew

This summer you could be enjoying a cuppa from the fresh leaves of your own tea shrub, as plant breeder Lubera has launched a tea plant hardy enough to grow in most UK gardens. Originating from South Korea's cold, mountainous region, *Camelia sinensis* 'Fresh-T' is a half hardy, well-formed shrub that needs a partially shaded site and an acidic soil (pH 4.5-6). You will also need to protect the plant from frost by mulching the soil around the plant with straw or leaf mould. It's priced at £14.90 for a 1.3L pot. **lubera.co.uk**

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Nigel & Mandy Keene *Basingstoke*

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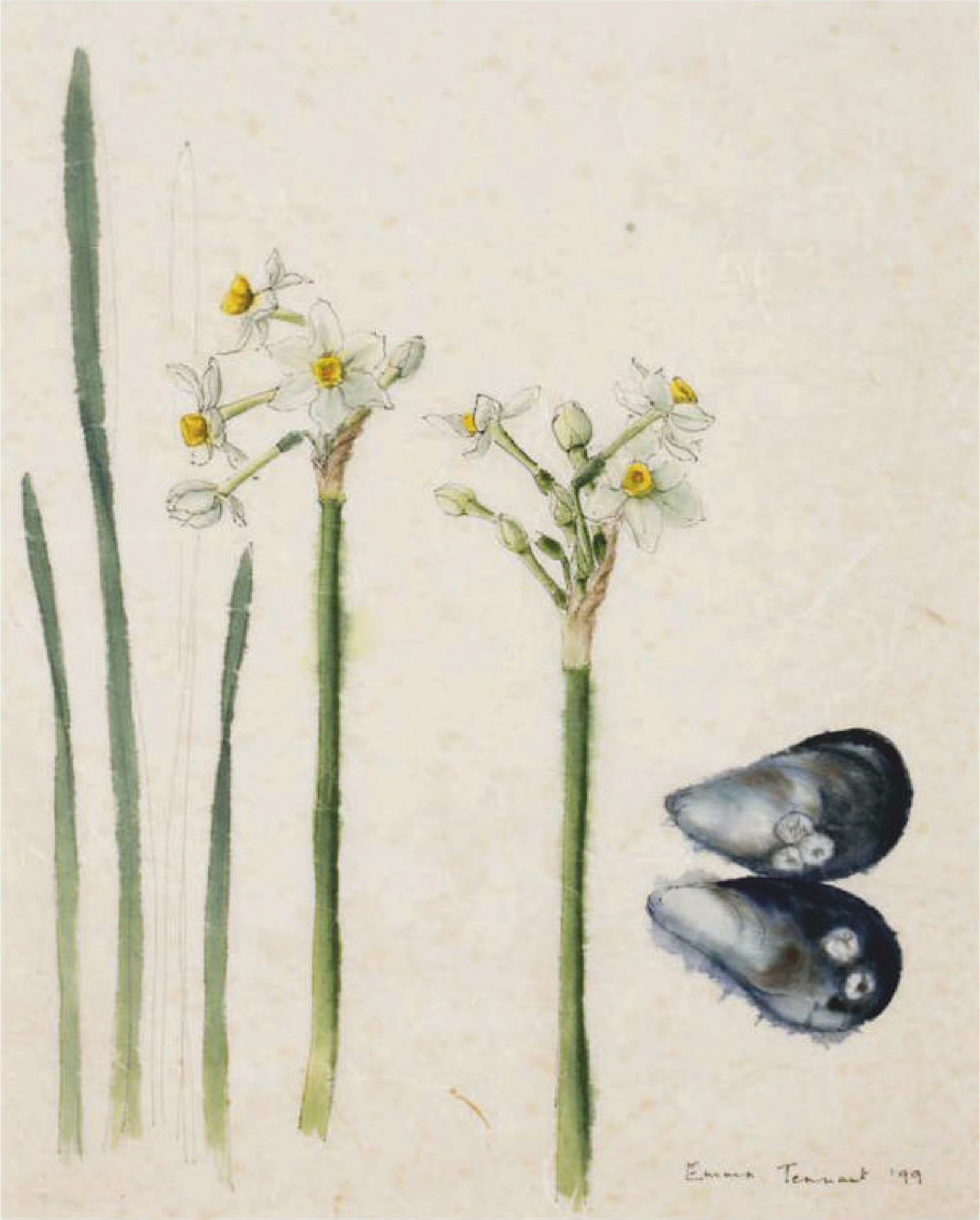
RARE PLANT FAIR

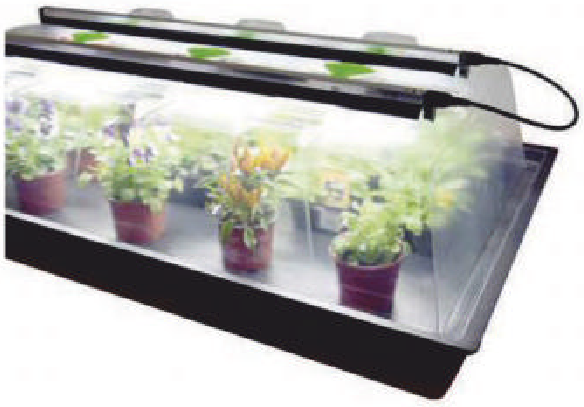
For 25 years the Rare Plant Fair has been touring beautiful venues around the UK bringing together specialist plant nurseries, many of which are National Collection Holders. Don't miss the first fair of 2019, which takes place in the setting of the Bishop's Palace in Wells, Somerset, 17 March, 10am-4pm, entry £6. Find details of the full schedule at **rareplantfair.co.uk**



Island tour

The self-taught artist and botanist Emma Tennant paints her beautiful, fragile-looking watercolours on an off-white Nepalese paper, and a Japanese paper made from the bark of the *Broussonetia papyrifera* tree. This month a new exhibition of her work, *Emma Tennant: A Botanical Tour of Great Britain from the Scillies to Sutherland*, opens at the Garden Museum in London, featuring plants both rare and familiar from around the British Isles, including the delicately scented, paperwhite daffodil *Narcissus* 'Scilly White' (above), which is found growing on the tiny island of Bryher, in the Scilly Isles. All paintings in the exhibition are for sale. 6 March – 28 April. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**

3 FOR THE GARDEN... *INDOOR PROPAGATORS*



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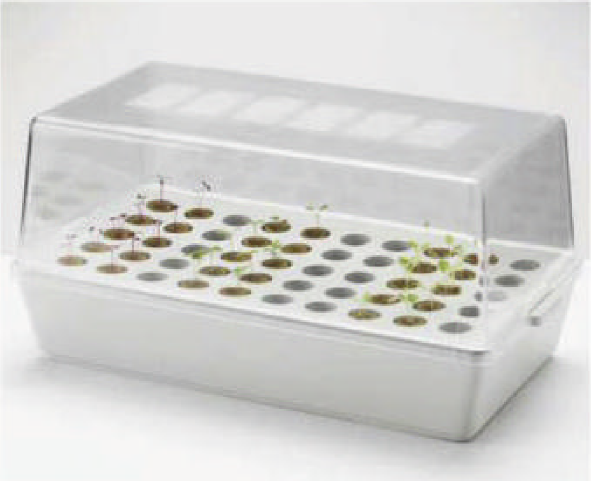

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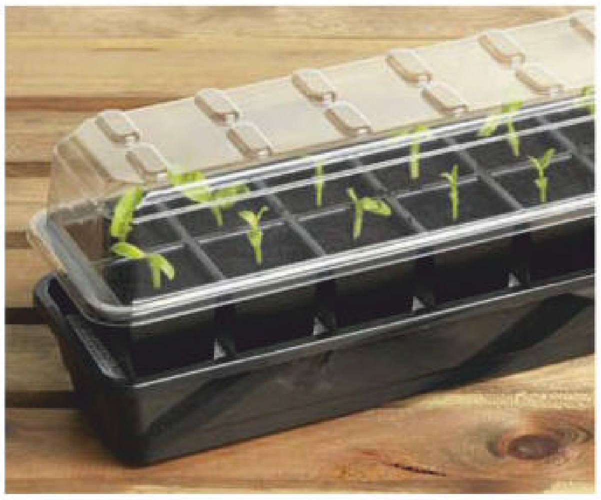

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NARCISSUS – SCILLY WHITE AND MUSSEL SHELLS BY EMMA TENNANT. PHOTOGRAPHY BY BEN WOOD / ISLAND IMAGES

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DIARY

COMPILED BY ALYS HURN AND ANNIE GATTI

❶ **International Garden Photographer of the Year exhibition**
Don't miss the chance to see the winners and runners up from 2018's International Garden Photographer of the Year competition. The touring exhibition is currently in the Nash Conservatory at Kew, featuring all the winning images, including Jill Welham's overall winner *Fireworks* (shown). Entry to the exhibition is included in the price of normal garden admission. Until 10 March, 10am-5pm. £16.50. Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AE. Tel 020 8332 5655, kew.org

❷ **Prints, Pots and Plants**
Browse work from artist, illustrator and printmaker Angie Lewin (shown), and potter Mark de la Torre in a joint exhibition of their work at Tinsmiths in Ledbury. Both artists draw inspiration from the plant world, and the exhibition will include prints and fabrics by Angie, and planters and bird boxes by Mark. 16 March – 29 April. Tinsmiths, Tinsmiths Alley, 8a High Street, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1DS. Tel 01531 632083, tinsmiths.co.uk

❸ **Science on Sundays**
Join the first of the Science on Sundays lecture programme held at Cambridge University Botanic Gardens. Each free lecture lasts just 30 minutes and aims to share with the public the latest discoveries in plant science. The first event is 'putting the Cambridge University Botanic Garden alpine collection under the microscope'. 17 March, 11am and 2pm. Cambridge University Botanic Garden, 1 Brookside, Cambridge CB2 1JE. Tel 01223 336265, botanic.cam.ac.uk

❹ **Primula Show**
Discover the magic of primulas at the Midland and West section of The National Auricula and Primula Society. There will be a variety of species on display, all competing for coveted awards from the show's judges. 23 March, 2-4pm. Arden School, Knowle, West Midlands B93 0PT. Tel 01530 810522, auriculaandprimula.org.uk

❺ **Bulbs for All Seasons with Anna Pavord**
Learn more about growing bulbs in the garden all year round at this month's talk for the Suffolk Plant Heritage Group. Guest speaker is the renowned garden writer Anna Pavord, who will be sharing her knowledge and advice. 23 March, 2.30pm. £15. Stowupland Village Hall, Suffolk IP14 4BQ. suffolkplants.org.uk

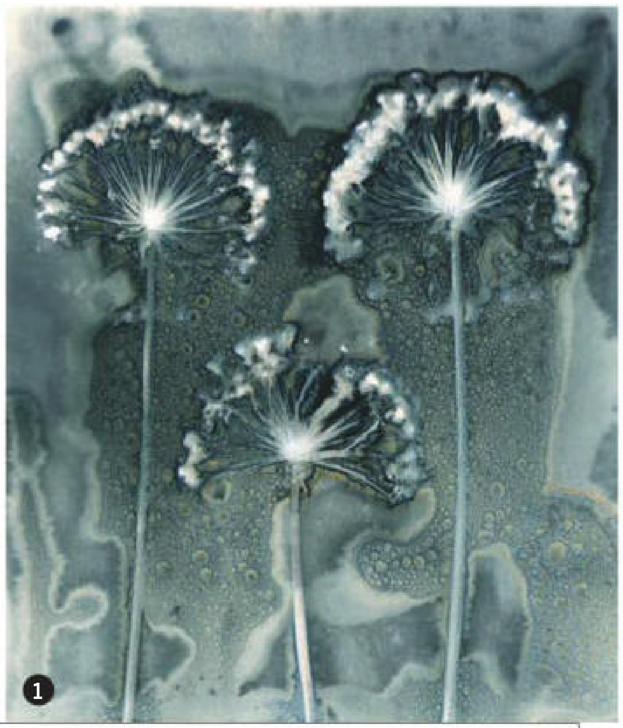
❻ **Thriplow Daffodil Weekend**
Enjoy daffodil displays in open gardens in the village of Thriplow near Cambridge. Homemade cakes and sandwiches will be served in the tea rooms and there will be live music in the street as part of this charity fund-raising event. 23-24 March, 11am-5pm. From £7.50. Thriplow, Cambridgeshire. Tel 01763 208059, thriplowdaffodils.org.uk

❼ **Distillery Garden Tour**
Learn more about the gin-making process on a tour of Edinburgh's Old Curiosity Distillery and gardens. The one-hour tours offer a chance to see the growing botanicals and witness the still in action, before sampling the finished product. From 23 March, Saturdays and Sundays, 11am, 1pm and 3pm. £15. The Old Curiosity Distillery, 32A Old Pentland Road, Edinburgh EH10 7EA. Tel 0131 285 6833, theoldcuriosity.co.uk

❽ **John Brookes: His Landscape Legacy**
Discover more about the gardens and landscapes designed by the late John Brookes at this lecture by Dr Barbara Simms of the Institute of Historical Research at the University of London. Part of the Gardens Trust Winter Lecture Season. 27 March, 6-8pm. £15. The Gallery, 77 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EL. Tel 020 7608 2409, thegardenstrust.org

❾ **Working with Colour**
Book now for a one-day course at West Dean College, looking at colour in the garden and how to make the most of it with techniques such as repetition, texture and height. Plus discover how to extend the season in your garden with late summer colour. Led by Tom Brown, head gardener at Parham House. 13 April, 9.15am-5pm. £125. West Dean College, West Dean, nr Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0QZ. Tel 01243 8183∑00, westdean.org.uk

❿ **Register for Cheslea Fringe Festival 2019**
If you've got an idea for this year's Chelsea Fringe Festival (12-18 May), make sure you register your project or event before the end of March to make sure you are featured on the map of Fringe events. Email info@chelseafringe.com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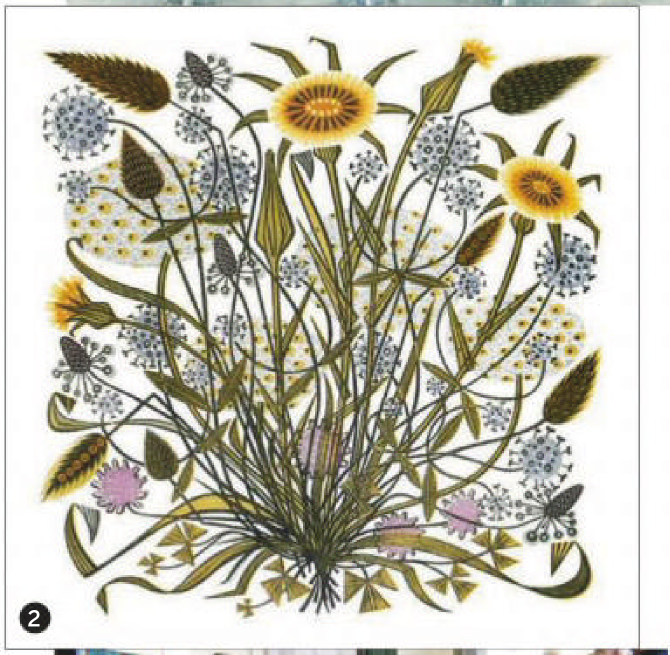
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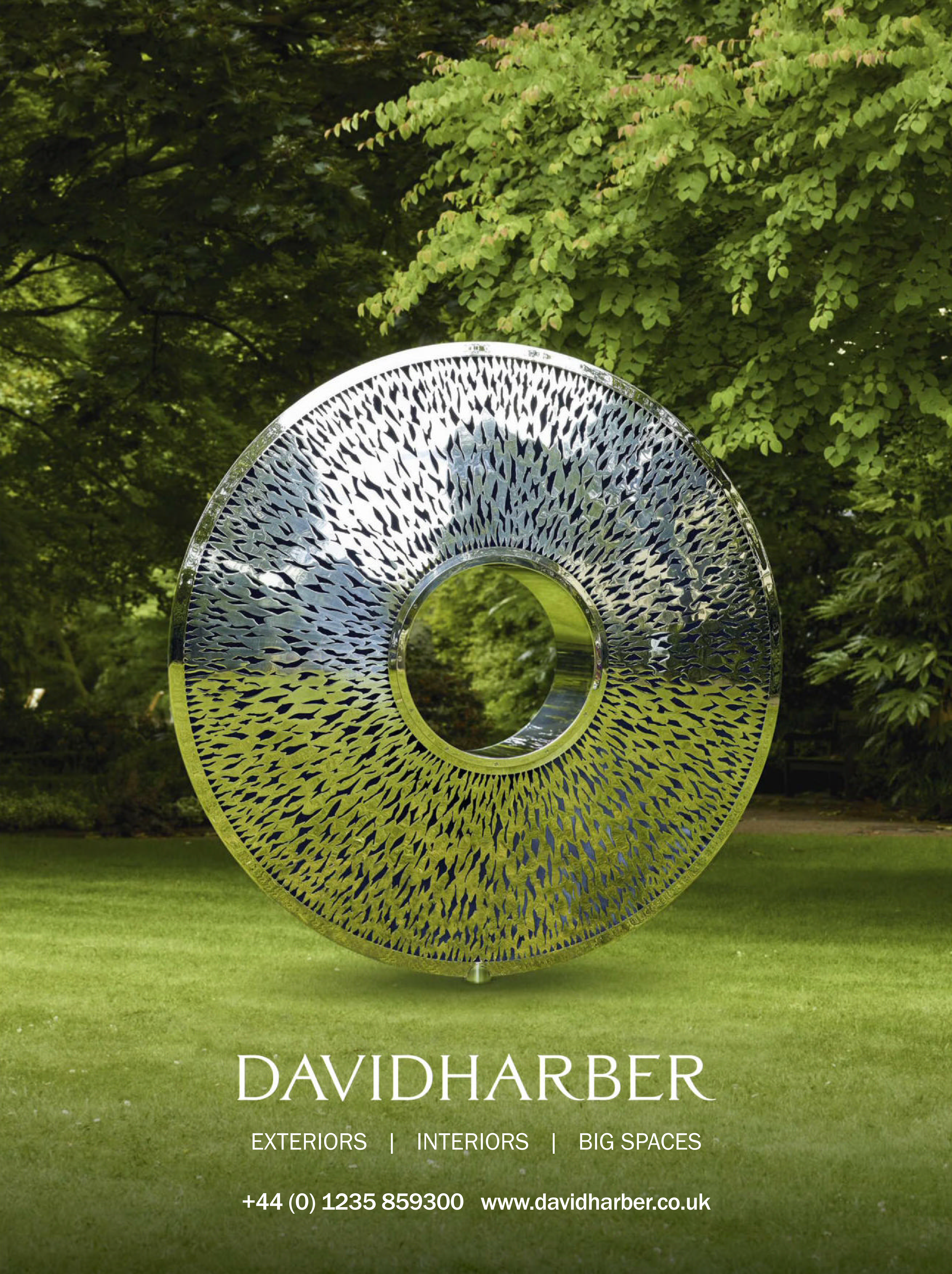

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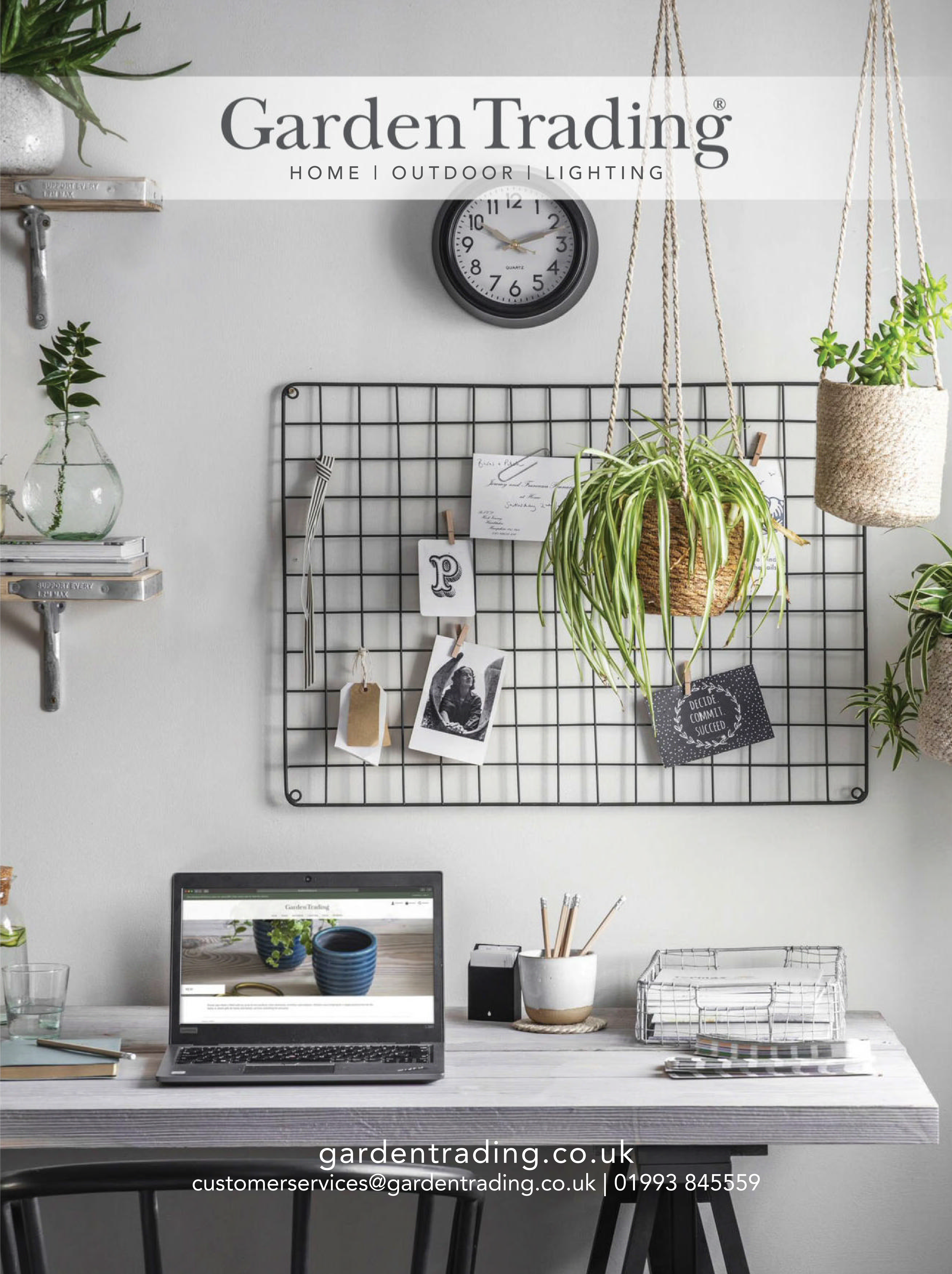
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KITTED OUT

For getting out in the garden this spring

COMPILED BY NIKI GOSS

1

MAIN IMAGE (THIS PAGE AND OVERLEAF) BY STEVE SAYERS

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1

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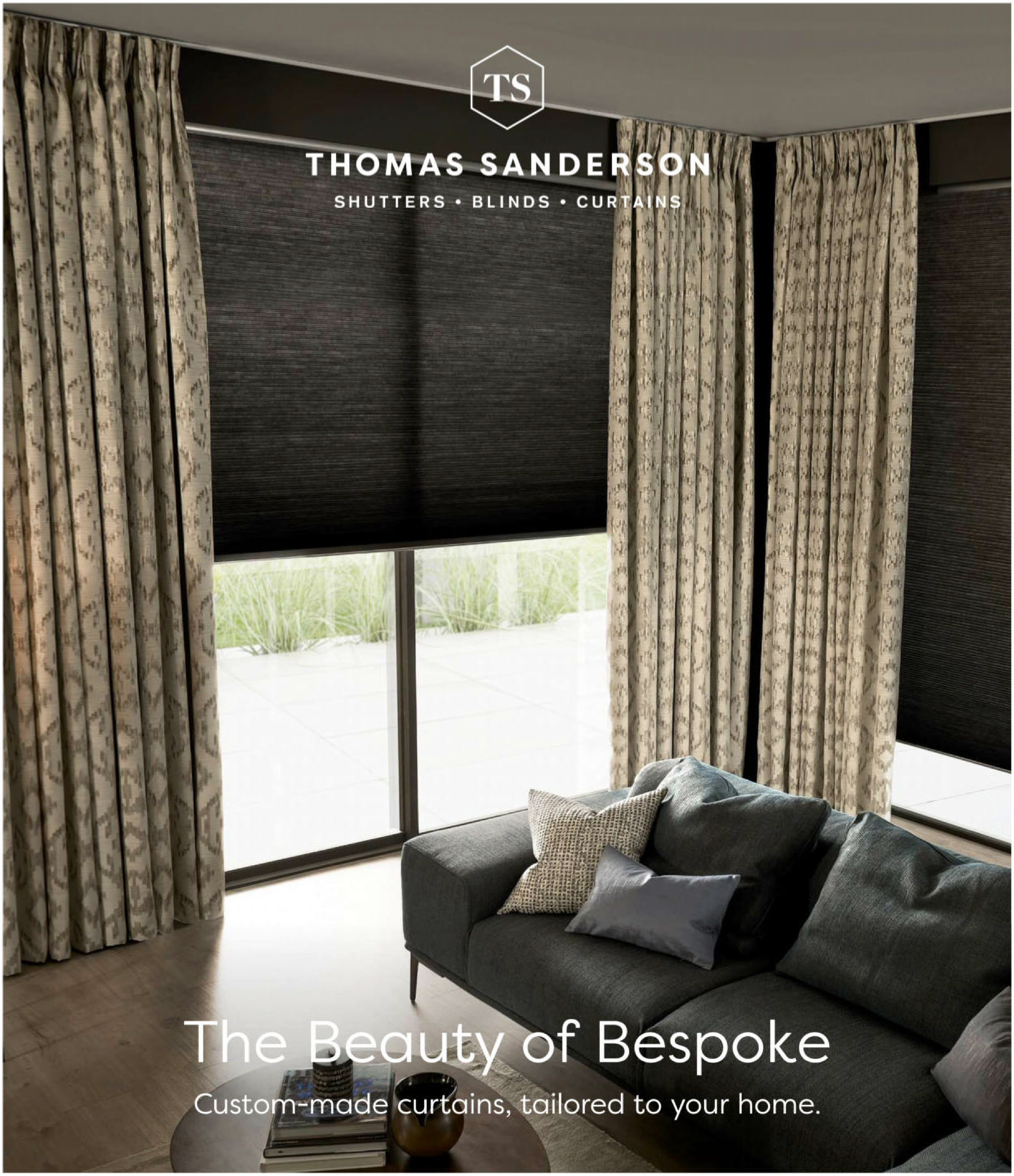
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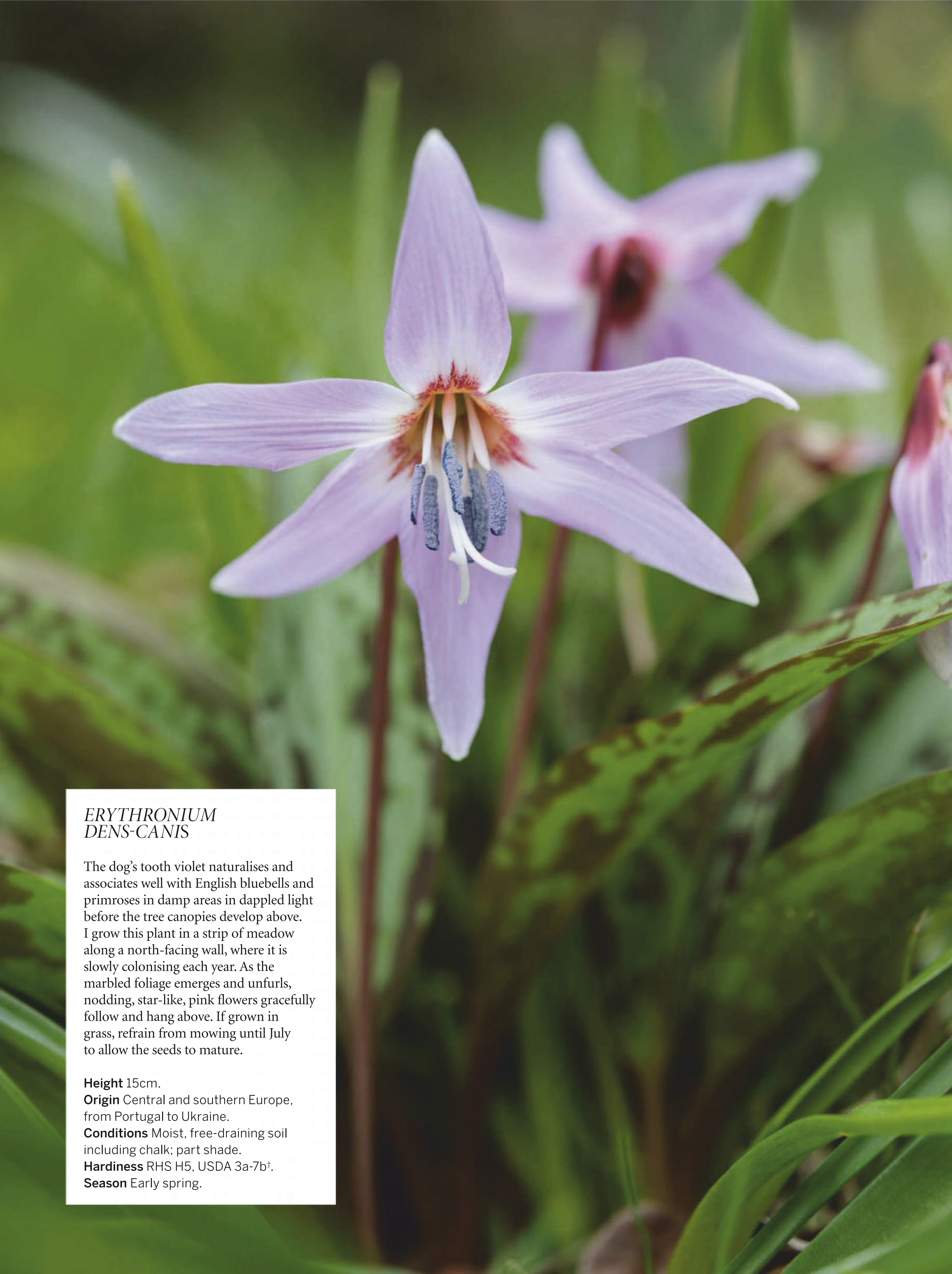


ERYTHRONIUM DENS-CANIS

The dog's tooth violet naturalises and associates well with English bluebells and primroses in damp areas in dappled light before the tree canopies develop above. I grow this plant in a strip of meadow along a north-facing wall, where it is slowly colonising each year. As the marbled foliage emerges and unfurls, nodding, star-like, pink flowers gracefully follow and hang above. If grown in grass, refrain from mowing until July to allow the seeds to mature.

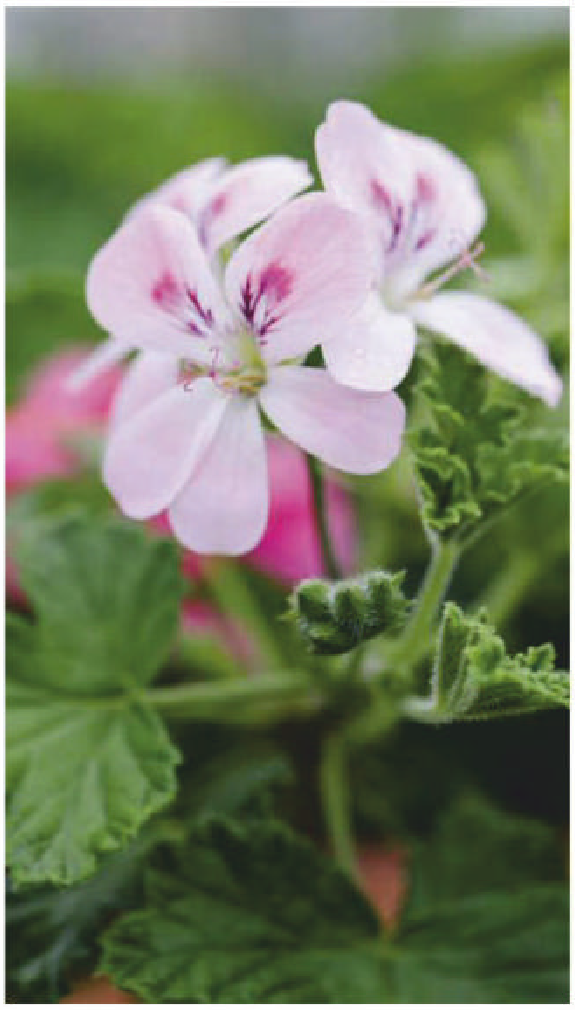
Height 15cm.
Origin Central and southern Europe, from Portugal to Ukraine.
Conditions Moist, free-draining soil including chalk; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 3a-7b[†].
Season Early spring.

Tom Brown
is head gardener
at Parham House
parhaminsussex.co.uk

MARCH PLANTS

Tom welcomes the return of spring with plants that bring an early boost of colour to borders and pots, from a delicately scented pelargonium to a rarely grown annual

WORDS TOM BROWN PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



PELARGONIUM 'SWEET MIMOSA'

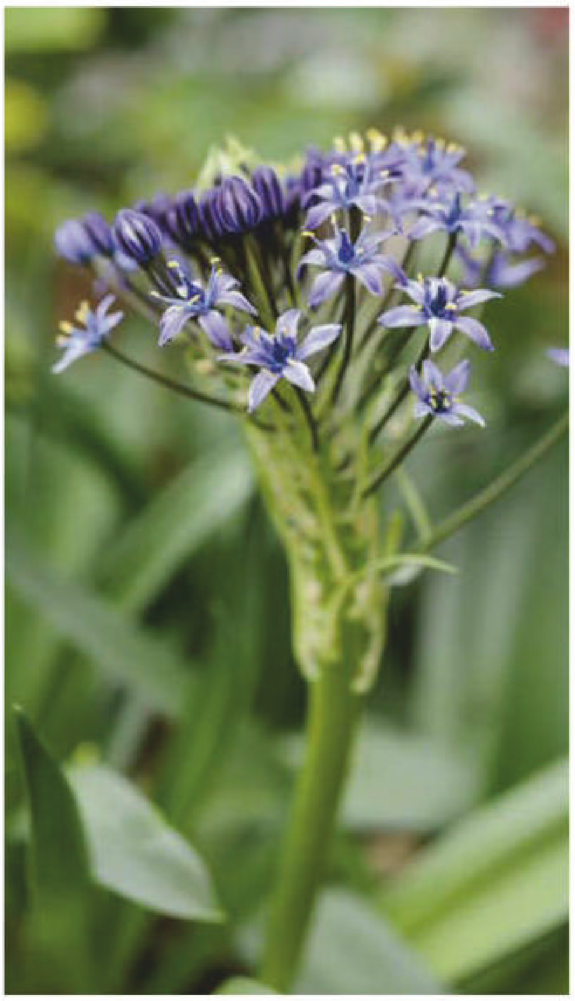
Scented pelargoniums are a joy, not only for their exquisitely elegant flowers but also for their aromatic foliage and easy-going nature. 'Sweet Mimosa' will flower under glass from March with increasing verve and vigour as the year progresses. Containerised plants benefit from deadheading and a weekly, liquid potash feed to maintain continuous flowering and an abundance of scented foliage. I find that the stems make a super cut flower in a small vase with long-stemmed heliotrope. AGM*.

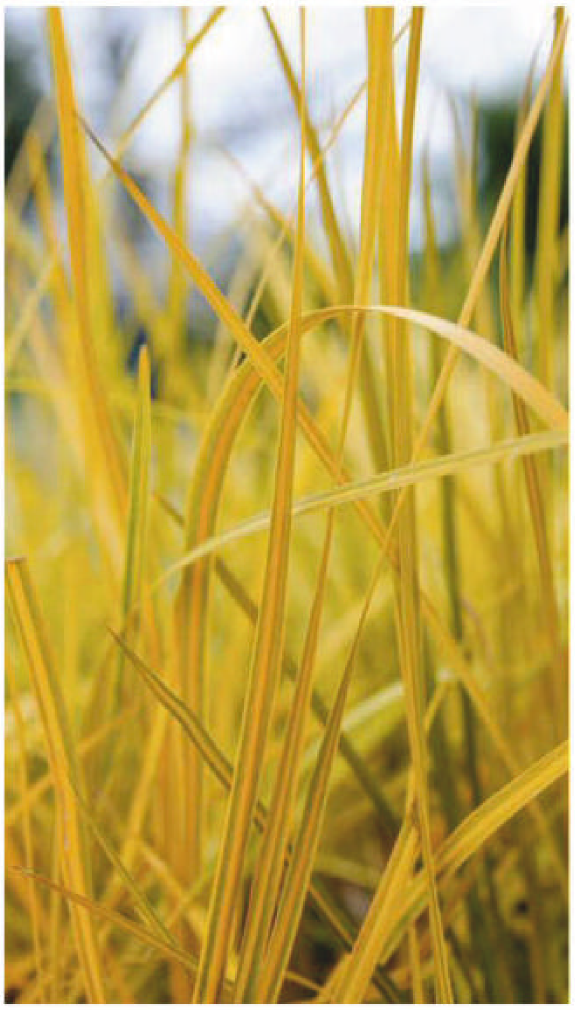
Height 50cm.
Origin Garden hybrid (species South Africa).
Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H1C, USDA 10a-11.
Season Flowers from February under glass; from mid-May if planted outside.

SCILLA PERUVIANA

Gardeners make me green with envy when their plots are sheltered enough to grow this magnificent *Scilla* outside. As I garden in a frost pocket, I am restricted to growing this bulb in a pot and must protect it from the extremes of wet and cold during the winter. With a little protection under glass, however, it will flower happily in March. Allow to dry out between watering and give it a period of dry dormancy during the summer. Grows well in chalk and any free-draining soil outside in a sheltered, sunny position.

Height 30-40cm.
Origin Iberian Peninsula, Italy and northwest Africa.
Conditions Sheltered, free-draining soil; sun or under glass.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
Season From early spring under glass.



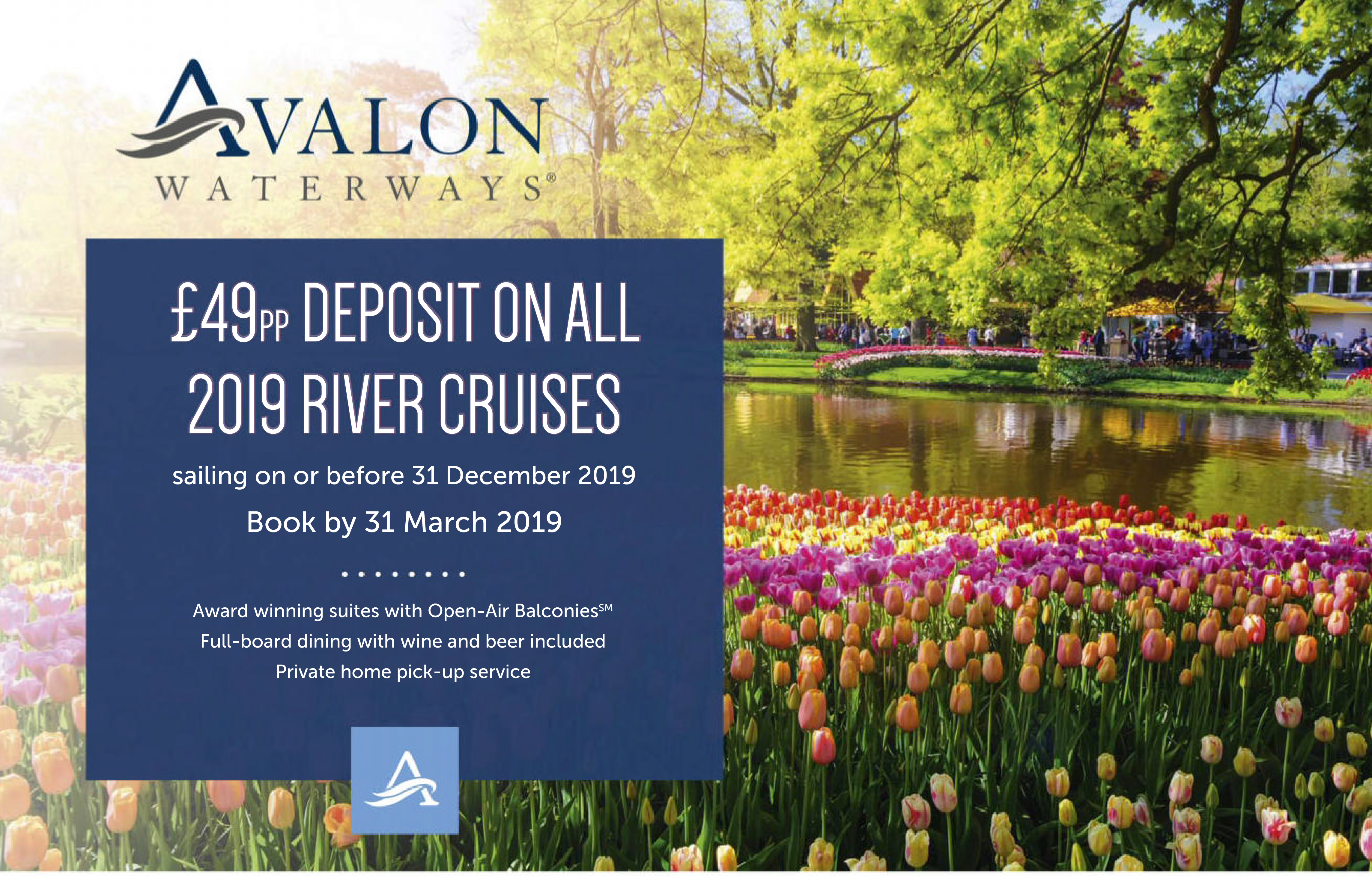


LIBERTIA IXIOIDES 'GOLDFINGER'

The grass-like foliage of this evergreen perennial has such presence at the start of the gardening year in mixed plantings – it draws your attention in the low light. Libertias will gently form a clump in an area over time and I find it dislikes competition and being overshadowed by other plants. In fact it tends to creep towards the front of the border where the drainage is sharpest. Clear damaged leaves in spring and then during the summer sprays of white flowers will appear as a welcome addition to the vibrant foliage. Colours best in full sun.

Height 50cm-1m.
Origin Garden (species New Zealand).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 7a-9b.
Season Foliar interest throughout the year, flowers in summer.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



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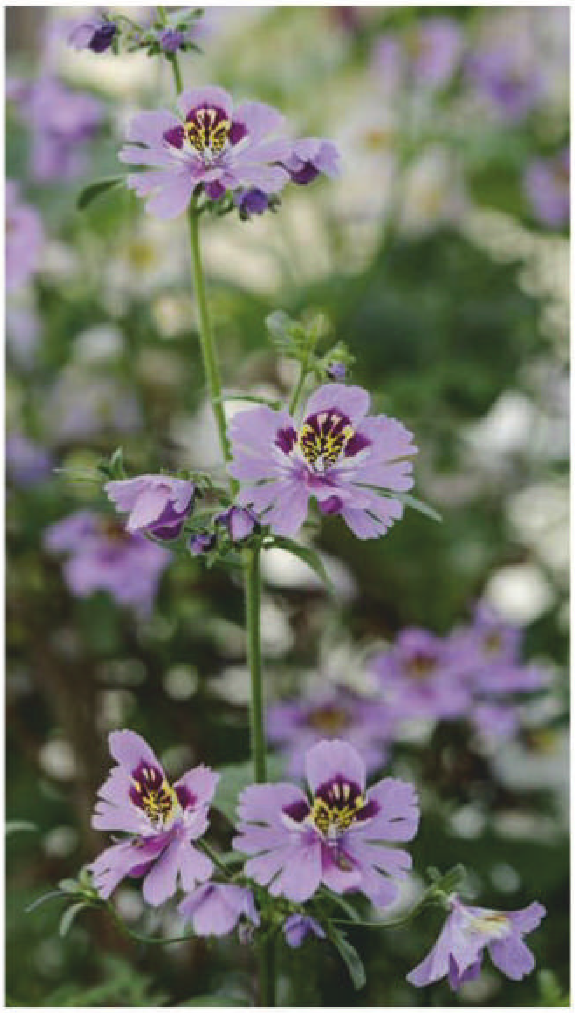
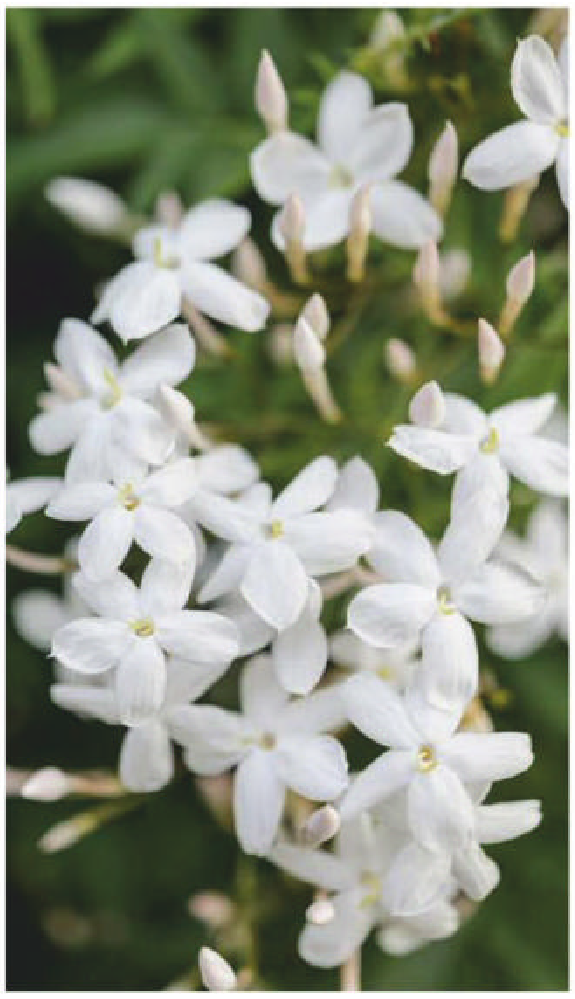
SCHIZANTHUS X WISETONENSIS

Sometimes known as poor man's orchid, *Schizanthus* is a much underused annual that has fallen out of favour of late. I sow in the autumn for a spring display under glass but you can also sow in March to plant out in May and treat as a half hardy annual that will flower outside from June until the first frosts. This Dr Badger's seed mix is available in a range of colours and will also provide cut flowers for the house. Provide light support with birch twigs or bamboo canes for best effect.

Height 75cm.
Origin Garden hybrid (species South America).
Conditions Fertile, moist, free-draining soil; full sun. Garden or containers.
Hardiness RHS H1C, USDA 2a-11.
Season From March (under glass) to first frosts.





JASMINUM POLYANTHUM

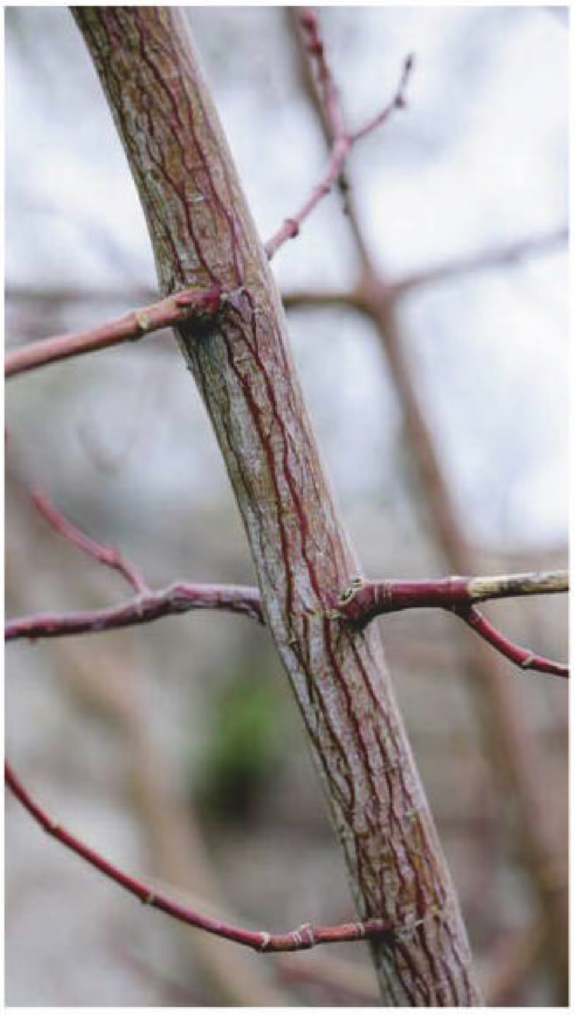
In March and April this evergreen climber is covered in clouds of richly perfumed, white flowers. I grow this jasmine under glass against a wall and prune heavily after flowering to prevent it sprawling forwards and taking up too much space. It's perfect for a well-lit conservatory or glasshouse. Feed with a balanced liquid fertiliser every couple of weeks during the growing season. In sheltered urban or coastal gardens, which are frost free, you can grow this jasmine outside with a bit of care but will not tolerate freezing temperatures. AGM.

Height 2.5-4m.
Origin China and Myanmar.
Conditions Well-drained, reasonable soil; full sun to part shade. Winter under glass.
Hardiness RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.
Season Flowering from February to April.

ACER DAVIDII 'SERPENTINE'

The mahogany-red, green and white-streaked bark of this *Acer* gives the appearance of a snake's skin, accentuated in winter and early spring by the absence of its foliage. This stunning tree will also provide colourful foliage, as the days shorten in autumn. Position with space around the stems to enjoy the effect of the low-level winter light bouncing off the bark. Remove basal growth as the tree develops so that you can establish a foliage-free base and fully appreciate the effect of the bark.

Height 8-12m.
Origin China.
Conditions Fertile, moisture-retentive but free-draining soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 5a-7b.
Season Stunning bark, good autumn colour.



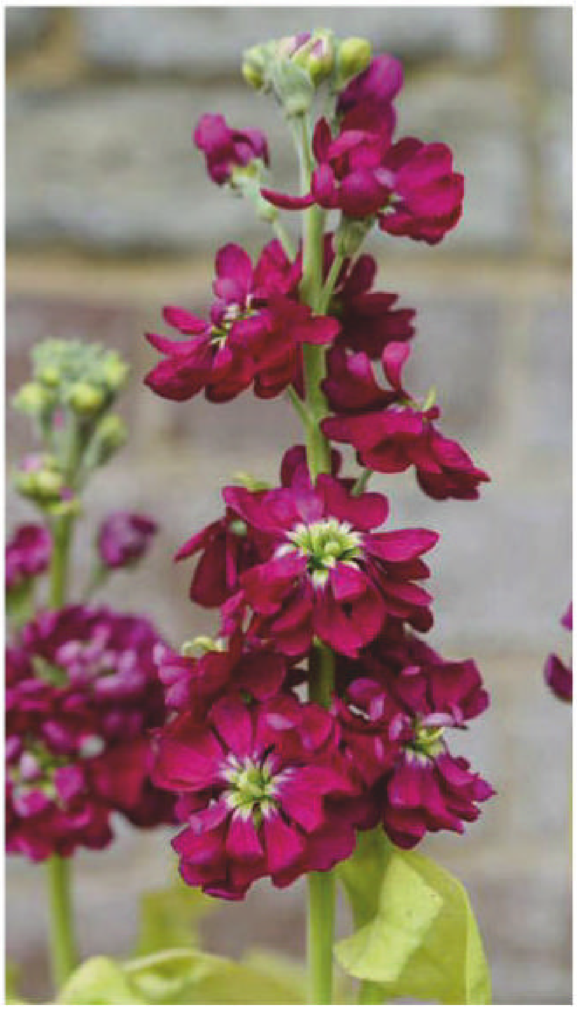
PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Hever Castle is well known as the childhood home of Anne Boleyn, but for horticulturists it has long been renowned for its magnificent displays of *Narcissus* throughout its grounds. Around 10,000 bulbs are added to the garden's spring displays each year, cumulating in a spectacle of early colour. Guided tours and talks are available throughout March. Check the website for timings of the tours and to see the seas of daffodils at their peak. Dogs on leads welcomed. Hever Road, Hever, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 7NG. Tel 01732 865224, hevercastle.co.uk

Chiswick House & Gardens in west London is famed for its collection of stunning camellias, Its Grade I-listed Conservatory houses a tremendous and historic living archive of these plants. The building was commissioned by the 6th Duke of Devonshire in 1810, but was not completed until 1813 at which time it was the largest conservatory ever built. Free tours are available in March (see website for details). Look out for the horticultural must see – one of two surviving specimens of *C. japonica* 'Middlemist's Red', which was originally brought back from China in 1804 by nurseryman John Middlemist. Burlington Lane, London W4 2RP. Tel 020 3141 3350, chiswickhouseandgardens.org.uk

There is always plenty to see at **RHS Garden Wisley** whatever time of year you choose to visit, but in March and



MATTHIOLA INCANA 'LUCINDA RED'

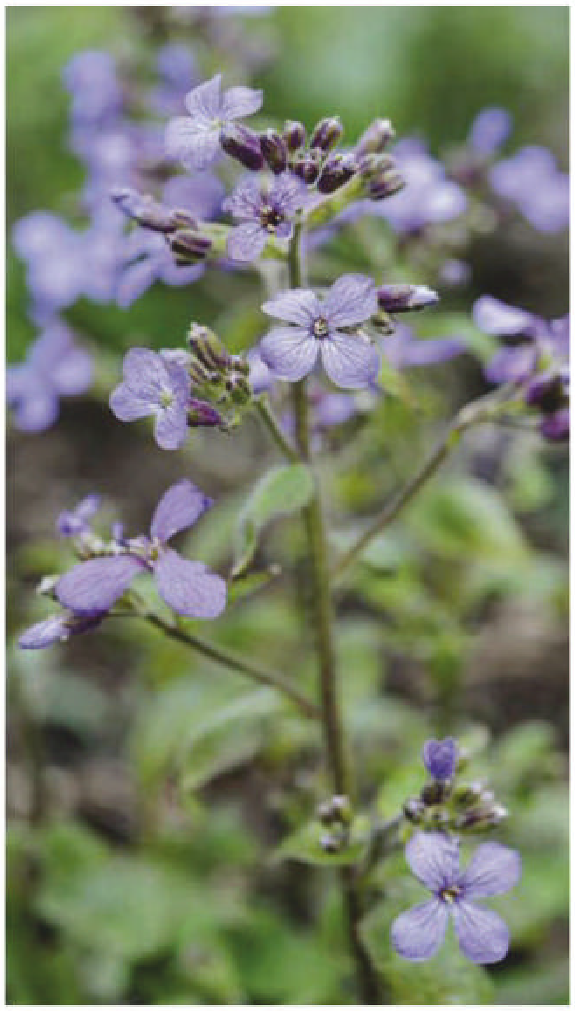
In the right conditions, you can have stocks in flower three months after sowing their seed. Once they've germinated, it is possible to separate the single and double-flowering plants, depending on the colour of the young leaves: the lime-green seedlings will provide double flowers; the darker ones will be single. Both have merit but I prefer to grow like with like. Ensure you feed initially with a nitrogen-based liquid feed to achieve good stem length; once budded switch to a higher potash mix. Soil needs to be moist and fertile for long stems.

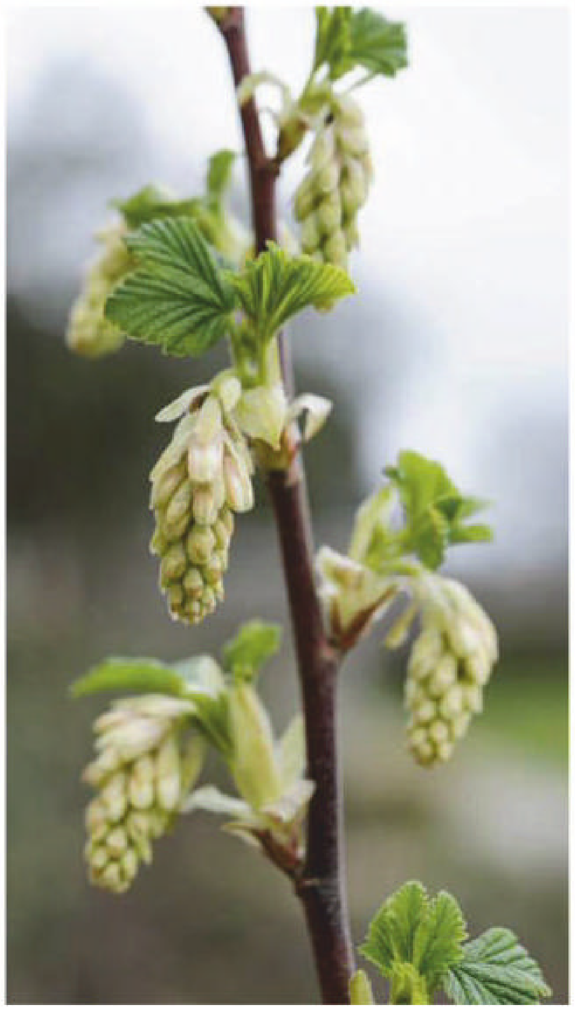
Height 50cm.
Origin Southern and western Europe.
Conditions Free-draining soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H4, USDA 7a-10b.
Season March to October (flowering three months after sowing).

LUNARIA ANNUA 'CORFU BLUE'

This is a new favourite of mine. It is a delight in the spring with a delicate and more compact, branched habit than the more widely known species *Lunaria annua* (honesty). For best results plant at the front of a border, away from competition, where it will associate beautifully with *Elaeagnus* 'Quicksilver' and *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'. If deadheaded, it will repeat flowers and but allow some later flowers to develop into attractive translucent seedheads in autumn, and collect the seed for sowing in late summer. AGM.

Height 50cm.
Origin Corfu, species southern Europe.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil in sun for best flowering performance.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.
Season Late spring.





RIBES SANGUINEUM 'ELKINGTON'S WHITE'

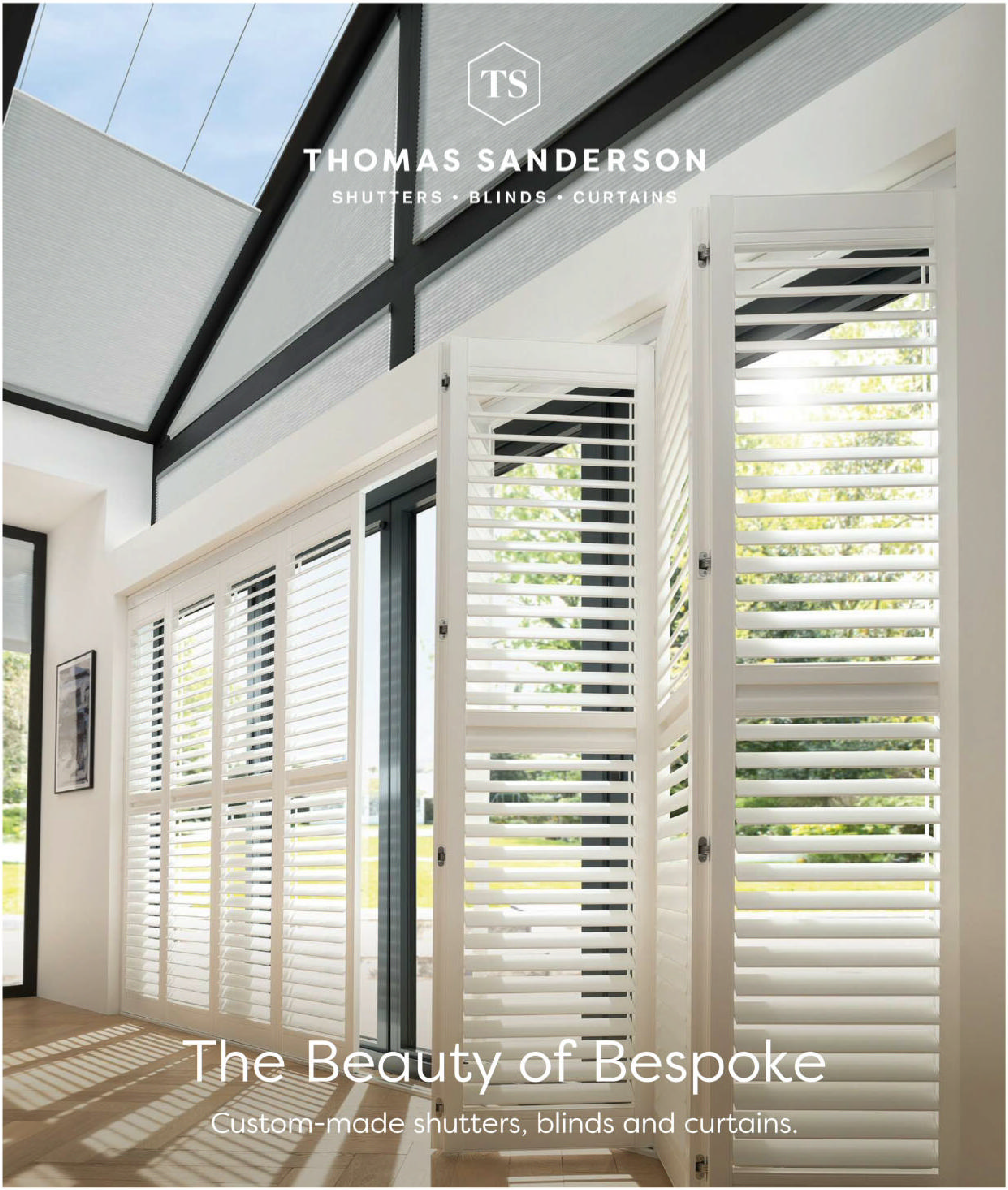
Although *Ribes* are hard to beat when it comes to reliable, spring-flowering shrubs, I hold my hands up and admit that I've been a little snooty when it comes to using them here in the garden. 'Elkington's White' has changed all that, and opened my eyes to the elegance and sophistication of this spring staple. With its robust habit, and pure-white flowers, which develop from pendulous, grape-like buds in March, it provides structure and a welcome splash of colour in a mixed border. Once established, prune for shape after flowering.

Height 2m.
Origin Western USA and Canada.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; sun or part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 5a-7b.
Season Flowers in late spring.

▷ throughout spring, be sure to visit Battleston Hill, Wisley's woodland garden, featuring a stunning collection of magnolias, rhododendrons and camellias. One of the joys of a wander around Battleston is that you can enjoy these fine specimens in relative peace and tranquillity – many of the garden's visitors miss them in favour of more central areas and features. Remaining one of the most horticulturally rich parts of the famous garden, it is also one of the oldest with many champion trees, including a *Cercidiphyllum japonicum*. A special spot during the spring months. Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 224234, rhs.org.uk

In February 2012, privately owned **Trewithen** in Cornwall became one of only 30 gardens in the world to be recognised by the International Camellia Society as a Garden of Excellence. Within 30 acres of beautiful woodland, more than 200 cultivars and species of *Camellia* thrive in a collection started in 1904 by owner George Johnstone. A particular highlight is the garden's Camellia Walk, benefiting, as does the rest of the garden, from the Cornish climate. There is a chance to visit Trewithen, as part of the *Gardens Illustrated* tour of Cornish gardens in April (see page 8 for details). Grampound Road, nr Truro, Cornwall TR2 4DD. Tel 01726 883794, trewithengardens.co.uk

In the USA, not far from Philadelphia, **Chanticleer Gardens** are a joy every spring, full of blossom and spring flowering bulbs. Formally the Rosengarten Estate, today Chanticleer represents a wonderful mix of plantsmanship, colour and contemporary design played out in a historic setting, surrounded by woodlands, agriculture and service areas. 786 Church Road, Wayne, PA 19087, USA. Tel +1 610 687 4163, chanticleergarden.org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The Outsider

A cornucopia of garigue flora, seen while hiking through Andalusia, gives horticulturist Hannah Gardner the idea of planting a cork oak in her own garden

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** ILLUSTRATION **ALICE PATTULLO**

Nearly a fifth of Andalusia, a large autonomous region of southern Spain, is protected, reflecting the unspoilt nature of the diverse countryside and the ecological importance of its territory. The southerly coastal Almeria province is Europe's only semi-arid, hot desert region and Andalusia is home to nature's superlatives. Snow-capped Mulhacén is the highest peak in Spain, while the driest area in continental Europe, the Tabernas Desert, lies within 30km of Almeria (itself the sunniest European city) where storms from the Sahara deposit sand rather than rain.

Inspiration for the trip

It was the prospect of finding a desert within easy reach of the Sierra Nevada peaks that first tempted me to venture beyond Granada's popular Alhambra Palace. The majestic red fortress with its shady courtyards and intricate Islamic arches, and the secluded water garden of the nearby Generalife, are both fascinating, yet the lofty villages and rugged landscapes beckon. Granada is a two-hour drive from most parts of Las Alpujarras.

When to go

Many narcissus species are found in this area. With flowering beginning early in the year, there is something of interest throughout late winter and spring. The peak season for most plants is April/May. The El Albardinal Botanic Garden, in Rodalquilar in the Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park, is open from September to May.

Where to go

Cabo de Gata-Níjar is a windswept and isolated coastal landscape in the far east of Andalusia with only 117mm of annual precipitation. Stony dry *barrancos*, ancient lava flows, eroded volcanic domes and dusty calderas are the habitat of tough, drought-tolerant plants. These are often low, evergreen shrubs with reduced, waxy or reflective leaves – in this climate, it is less risky to be opportunistic and perennial, taking life slowly, and reproducing when conditions are favourable. These garigue plants, many of which are aromatic – the rosemary, cistus, phlomis, lavenders and thyme – also have allelopathic properties and disperse chemicals that inhibit the germination of competitors. Bulbs and grasses abound, adept survivors all. A pretty, pastel-pink Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis purpurea*), its thick leaves once used to make lamp wicks, is widespread, associating with the sunshine yellows of cotton lavender (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*) and the low, felty germander *Teucrium polium*. Rare endemics, such as dainty snapdragon *Antirrhinum charidemi* and the elegant, gypsum-loving *Narcissus pachybolbus,* also grow here. The clump-forming esparto grass (*Stipa tenacissima*) has colonised the hills, jostling with mounds of mesmerising, spiky *Ziziphus lotus*, whose fruits, like those of its buckthorn relative, are edible. It is well worth visiting El Albardinal Botanic Garden, which showcases the natural flora and agricultural plants of the area while raising awareness of the threats to habitats. Heading northwest, the countryside is a patchwork of tumbling terraces, floriferous orchards and Moorish irrigation channels that run for miles. Here the garden-worthy shrub *Bupleurum fruticosum* grows alongside calming lavenders, fennel and eye-catching mirror orchids.

The richly cultivated Alpujarras region nestles on the southern flanks of the Sierra Nevada, an area blessed with snow melt and incredible flora. The region's Moorish heritage is again apparent in Capileira, the highest of the ancient white villages clinging to the mountainside along the Poqueira Gorge. Narrow walkways wind through sturdy whitewashed dwellings, the distinctive cone-hatted and sooty chimneys a reminder of the high elevation, at 1,436m. Pyrenean oaks (*Quercus pyrenaica*) occur from 1,000m, sheltering *Helleborus foetidus* and yellow bee and sombre bee orchids, alongside other highlights, such as wild tulips, lilies, narcissus and gentians. There are many wonderful hikes here; stay high and you may even find *Crocus nevadensis* at the snow line.

Plants to grow at home

I first saw the attention-grabbing, gnarly cork oak growing in an undulating grove near Haza del Lino on the drive up from the coast towards the Sierra Nevada. Intrigued by its fluid silhouette and tactile, fissured bark, I discovered a colourful understorey of heather, gorse, lavender, dusky-pink *Cistus albidus*, and the edible fungi *Boletus* and *Cantharellus*. The oak's curious thick outer bark is an effective adaption to the natural 25- to 30-year cyclical fire regime of Mediterranean vegetation; it regenerates, so the bark of a mature plant can be harvested. Its characterful habit, textured bark and evergreen canopy make this an alluring, wildlife-friendly, medium-sized garden tree. Growing wild in the hot, dry conditions of southern Europe and North Africa, it's a good choice for sheltered, southern or mild coastal locations, being impervious to salt spray. Frost-tolerant to -7°C, it requires free-draining soil. Like many Mediterranean plants it struggles with excessive cold and damp, but withstands drought well. □

Guides and maps

Wild Plants of Southern Spain by Tony Hall (Kew Publishing, 2017) is a beautifully illustrated guide with useful location maps.

You can download trails of varying length and difficulty at **wikiloc.com**

Where to stay

Hotel Alcadima
Carretera Francisco Tarrega 3,
18420 Lanjarón, Granada, Spain.
Tel +34 (0)958 770809, alcadima.com
This charming, homely hotel is situated in the lively historic centre of Lanjarón in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada National Park. Being just over 20 miles from Granada, it makes a good base.

Hotel Cortijo El Sotillo
Carretera Entrada San José,
04118 San José, Almeria, Spain. Tel +34 (0)950 611100, playasycortijos.com
A refurbished, 18th-century, country-style hotel looking out on to the desert in Cabo de Gata-Níjar Natural Park.

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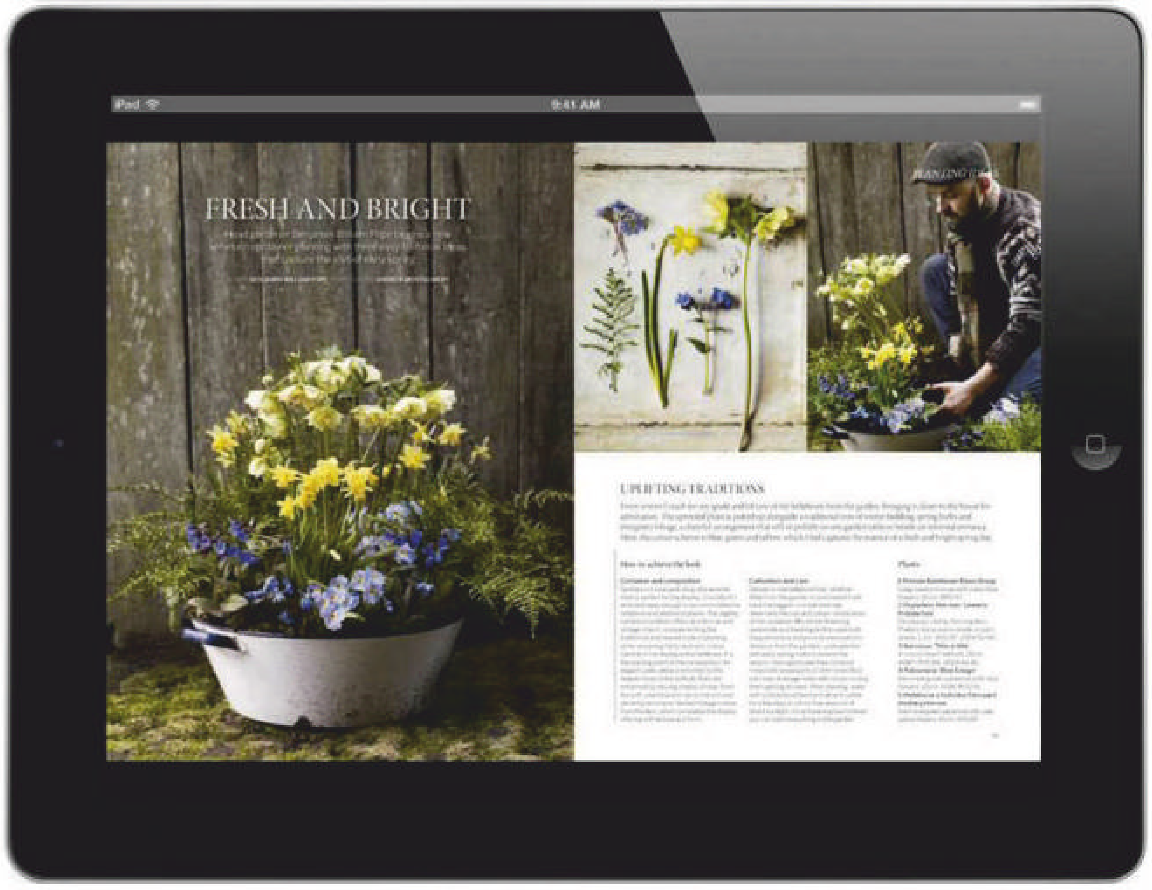
MARCH PLANTS

CALL OF THE WILD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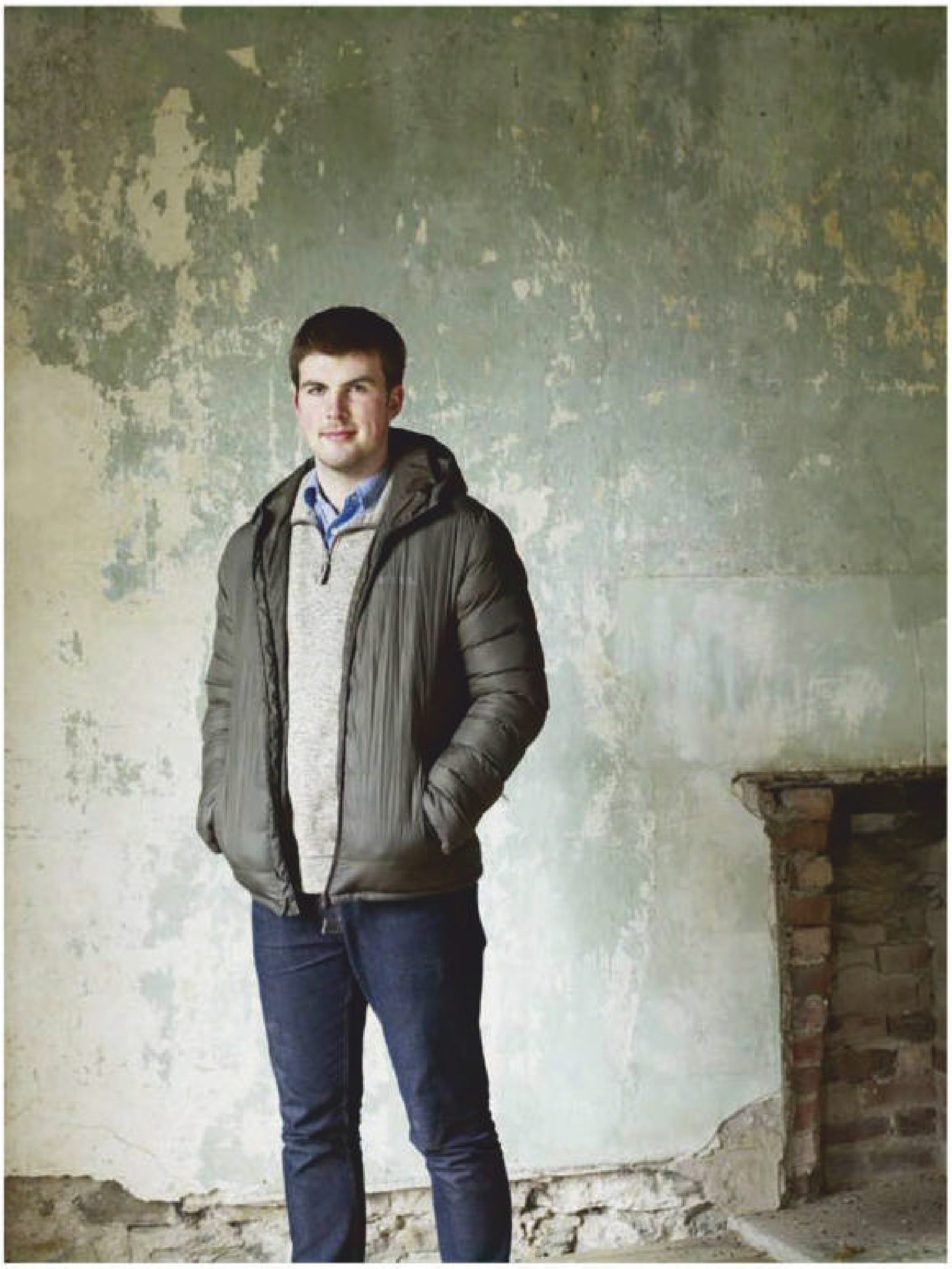


GARDENING TALENT

Huw Richards

YouTube sensation Huw knows how best to use social media to spread the word about growing your own food simply and cheaply, setting a path for a new generation of gardeners

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Earliest gardening memory One that comes to mind is from when I was in primary school. My dad told me to soak some beetroot seeds in warm water and leave them on the windowsill until after school. I was so excited to get home and sow the seeds with my dad.

First plant love Redcurrants, I used to propagate and sell soft fruit when I was about ten years old, and redcurrants always stood out – due to them being so deliciously sweet and juicy, but also surprisingly productive in the shadier corners of the garden.

How did gardening become your career? I started my YouTube channel when I was about 12, and after A-levels I decided to go full time with it. So currently it has been my only career.

Horticultural hero I love what James Wong is doing with introducing new and exciting edible plants to British gardens. Over the past 50 to 100 years, the average kitchen garden hasn't seen much change in diversity of plant types.

Favourite garden I am influenced by gardens with a lovely vegetable-growing area and an orchard full of character. If I was to single out the garden that impresses me the most then it would have to be Charles Dowding's market garden.

Unsung hero of the veg patch I am inclined to say the humble swede. It doesn't get much attention, but it's a fantastic winter veg that thrives in our climate, and mashed swede is a much healthier alternative to mashed potato with around half the calories.

What principles have guided your attitude to gardening? This could sound unprofessional, but I think the principle of not having to be a perfectionist has been a substantial one. It is so easy to get drawn into trying to get everything just right, but you lose an incredible amount of efficiency. I feel it is much better to just go for it, accept failures will happen and always highlight the successes you do have.

Next big project I've just written a book and I'm in the process of building a new garden in partnership with the RHS where I will be running vegetable growing trials aimed at the home gardener and allotmenteer.

Contact YouTube HuwsNursery, Facebook @HuwsGardenNursery, Instagram huws_nursery. Huw's new book is published this month: *Veg in One Bed: How to Grow an Abundance of Food in One Raised Bed, Month by Month* (DK, £14.99).

IN BRIEF

Name Frith Old Farmhouse.
What Plantsman's garden.
Where near Faversham, Kent.
Size Three quarters of an acre.
Soil Heavy clay with flints, an old farmyard with rolled hardcore, and reasonable topsoil.
Climate Warm summers, low rainfall and frosts in winter.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

In spring, the view across the shade garden is a richly textured tapestry of emerging fresh foliage. It is the perfect backcloth for purple-flowered *Lunaria annua, Trillium kurabayashii* and the vertical accents of yellow- and green-leaved *Iris pseudacorus* 'Variegata'.

CALL OF THE WILD

Seed collecting trips around the world and a collaborative approach have created a fascinating plantsman's garden in Kent

WORDS **MATTHEW BIGGS** PHOTOGRAPHS **BENNET SMITH / MMGI**

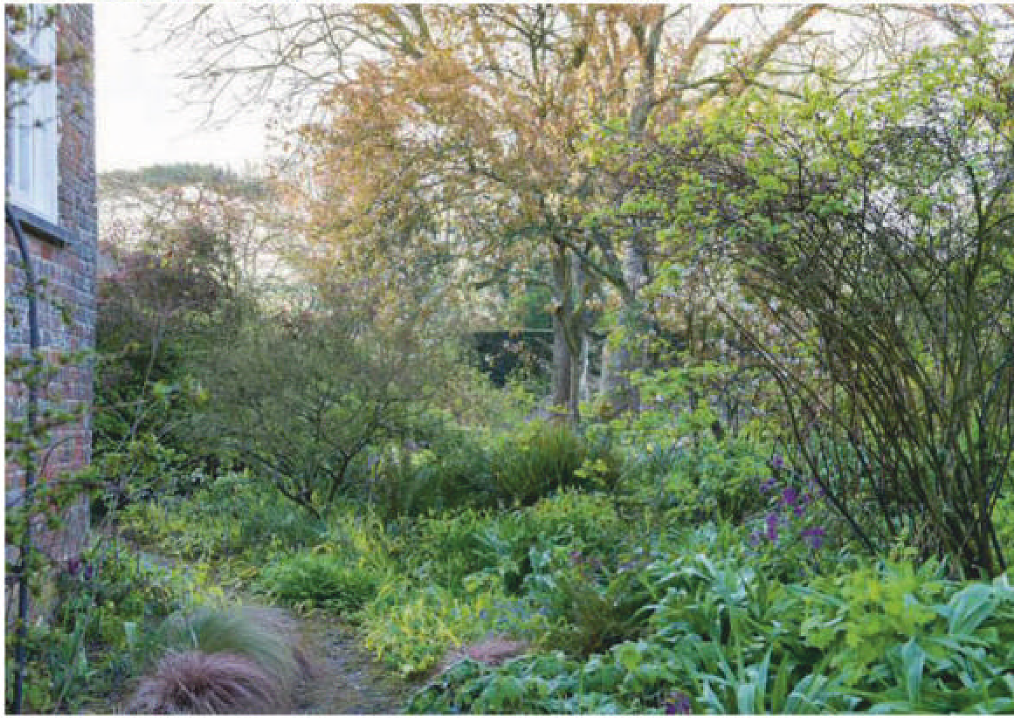
It is not unusual for great gardens to be created by collaborating couples: Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson, and Beth and Andrew Chatto, immediately spring to mind. The same collaborative approach is revealed at Frith Old Farmhouse, where Gill and Peter Regan have created a fascinating plantsperson's garden. Both are fanatical about plants; Gill, a plantswoman, has been interested in British wildflowers since childhood, while Peter takes a keen interest in the supporting sciences of taxonomy, nomenclature and ecological habitats.

When they moved into Frith Old Farmhouse 50 years ago, a friend gave them *Dracunculus vulgaris*, which they planted by a low flint wall and, in the only shade created by two Bramley apple trees and seedling elderberries to the south side of the house, they planted *Cyclamen hederifolium* and *Galanthus nivalis*.

Eager to learn, Peter read Vita Sackville-West, Graham Stuart Thomas, and Richard Gorer's *Trees and Shrubs: A Complete Guide*. Gill used Stanley Whitehead's *Everyman's Encyclopaedia of Gardening* and both put their knowledge into practice. They joined the RHS, the Hardy Plant Society and the Alpine Garden Society, where Pamela Schwerdt and Sibylle Kreutzberger, the head gardeners at Sissinghurst, and renowned nurserywoman Elizabeth Strangman regularly attended monthly meetings. "Society meetings were a perfect place to learn," explains Gill. "People brought in interesting and unusual plants to sell or swap, and were so willing to share knowledge and offer advice." It was here that Gill first discovered trilliums and an enduring passion began. "Our first purchase, *Trillium kurabayashii* from North America, with deep-red flowers and mottled green and brown foliage, now self-seeds," she says. Visits to National Garden Scheme gardens also yielded unusual plants. "We were given one on condition we would tell the owner its name," says Gill. "We took it home and identified it as *Melittis melissophyllum*. The owner was delighted." It is a pretty but rare British native, a relative of the dead nettle. With orchid-like, white flowers and a pink lip, it is ideal for woodland gardens or herbaceous borders and very attractive to bees, yet it is still not widely planted.

In recent years, Peter and Gill have travelled widely to see plants in the wild, visiting many locations including Turkey, Oregon, northern California, South Africa, Kazakhstan and China, often with the Alpine Garden Society. The experience of seeing plants in the wild has influenced their understanding of the needs of plants and as a result, they have created new habitats. A scree garden was constructed along a low wall, a ridge of flints is now home to those needing shade, and there is a pile of bricks camouflaged with groundcover ivy for plants needing free-draining substrate and more sunshine. The latter has proved to be perfect for *Paeonia obovata* var. *alba*, which produces ▷

To continue turn to page 42



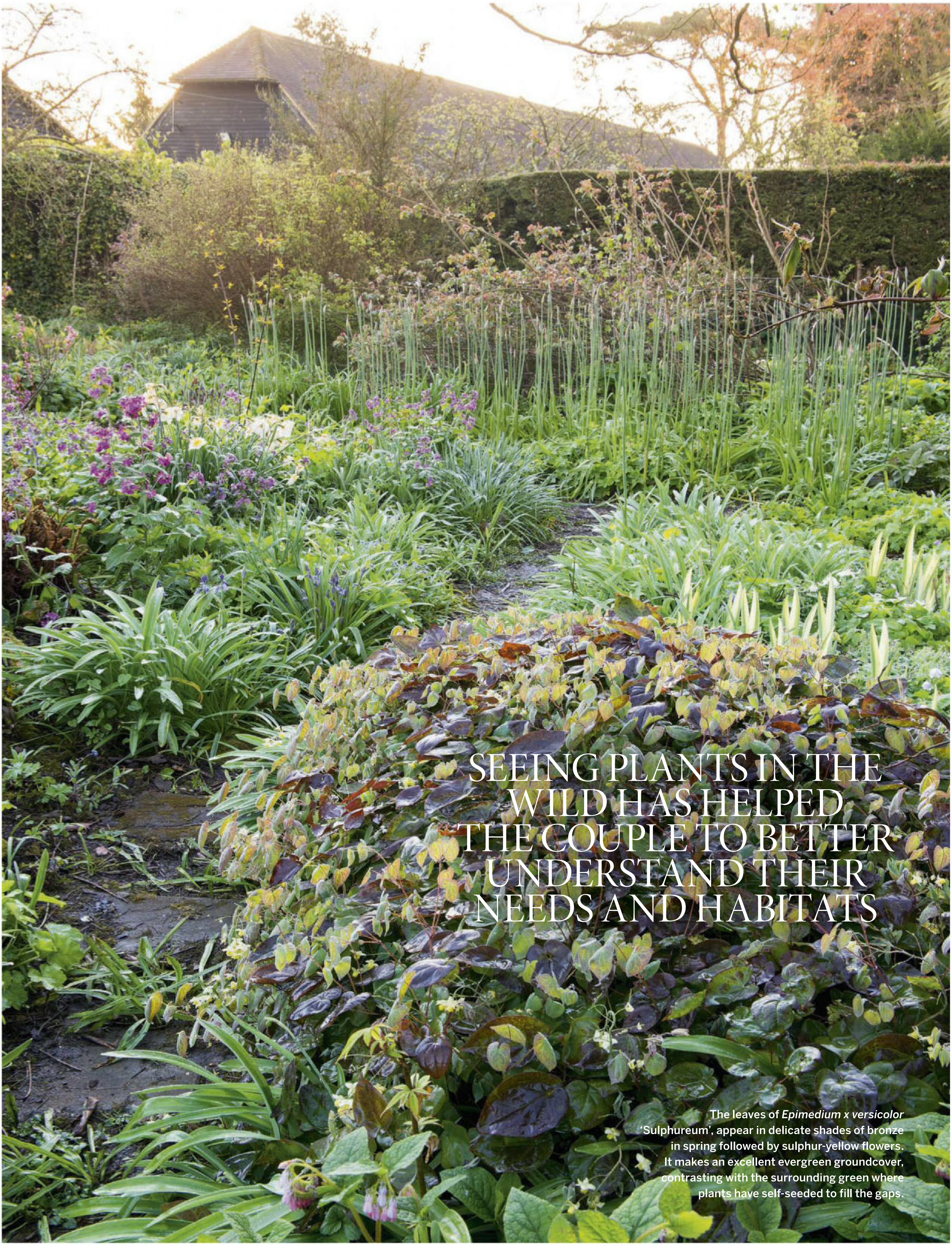
Right, from top to bottom

At the base of the *Paulownia tomentosa*, the leaves of which appear in May, is the small, fine-branched, deciduous *Prunus tenella* 'Fire Hill', with fine, pink double flowers that wreath the stems until the fresh green leaves appear.

Amelanchier lamarckii provides a secondary layer of colour and interest above the emerging foliage in spring. White blossoms complement the coppery-pink young leaves as they emerge and go on to provide interest later in the season with their rich, yellow autumn colour.

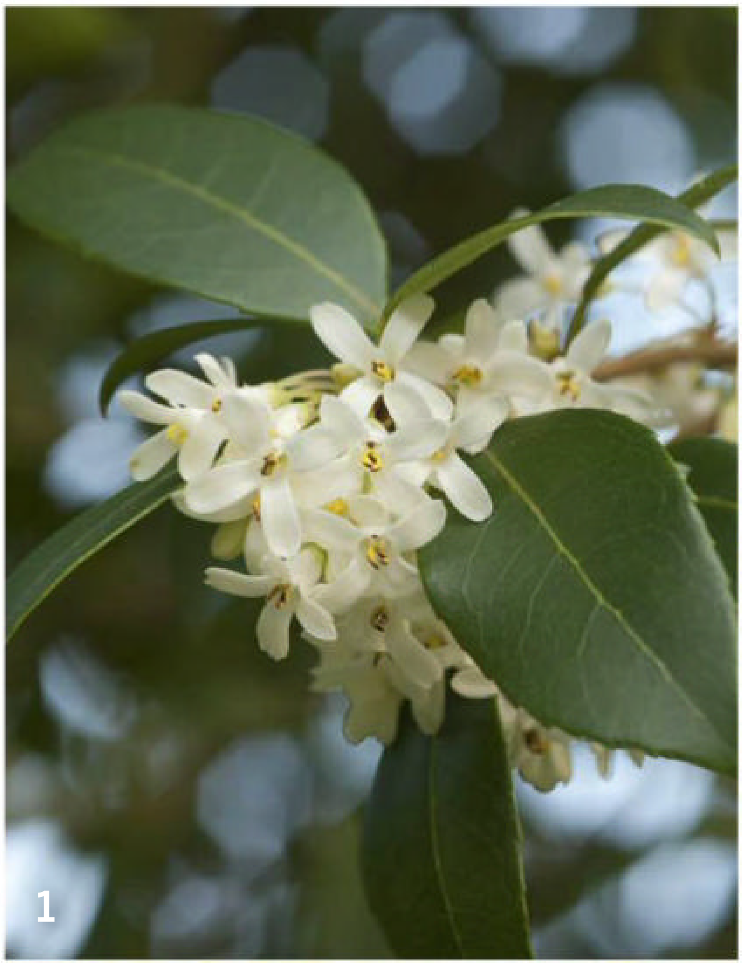
The bright-pink flowers of an unnamed *Bergenia* seedling are planted so that the textures and colours of the whole plant can be enjoyed. On the opposite side of the path is the rounded, upright form of *Euphorbia mellifera*, whose sweet, honey-fragranced flowers live up to their name.

The tall shrub rose *Rosa* 'Nevada', bearing fresh-green leaves at the tips, arches over self-seeded forget-me-nots and *Milium effusum* 'Aureum' that spread freely around in the shade garden. In summer the rose is covered in a profusion of creamy white double flowers.



SEEING PLANTS IN THE WILD HAS HELPED THE COUPLE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR NEEDS AND HABITATS

The leaves of *Epimedium x versicolor* 'Sulphureum', appear in delicate shades of bronze in spring followed by sulphur-yellow flowers. It makes an excellent evergreen groundcover, contrasting with the surrounding green where plants have self-seeded to fill the gaps.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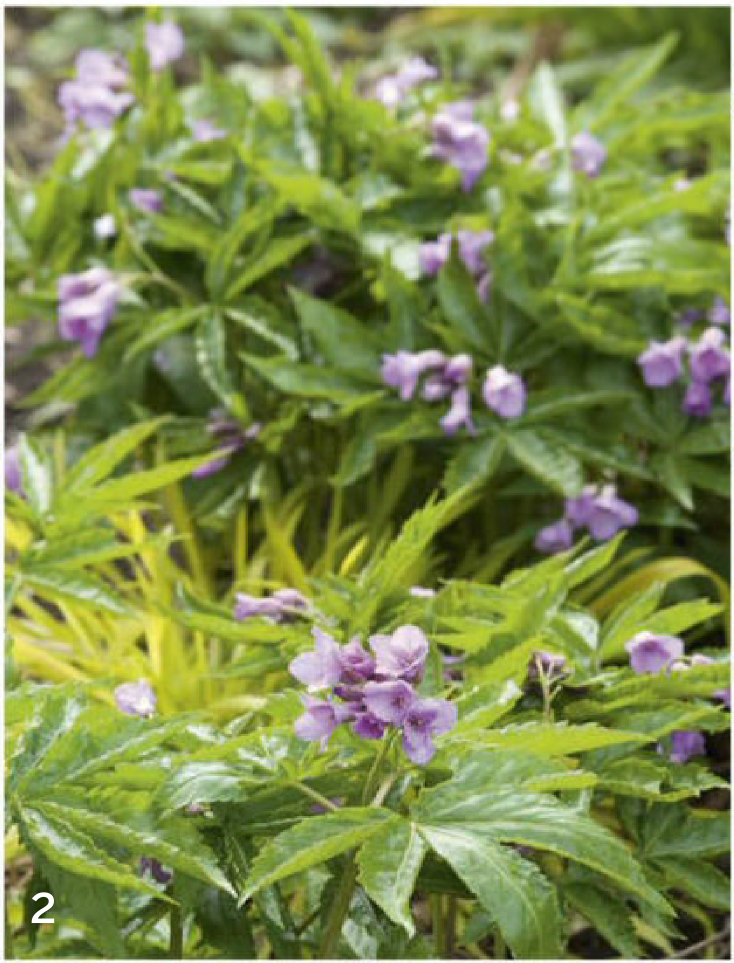
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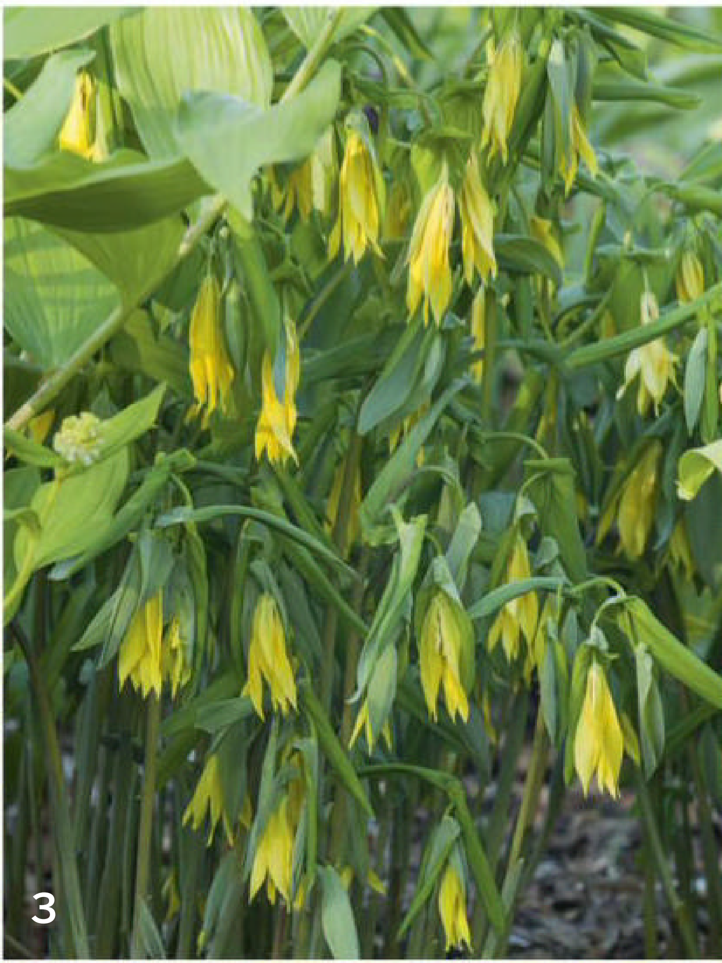
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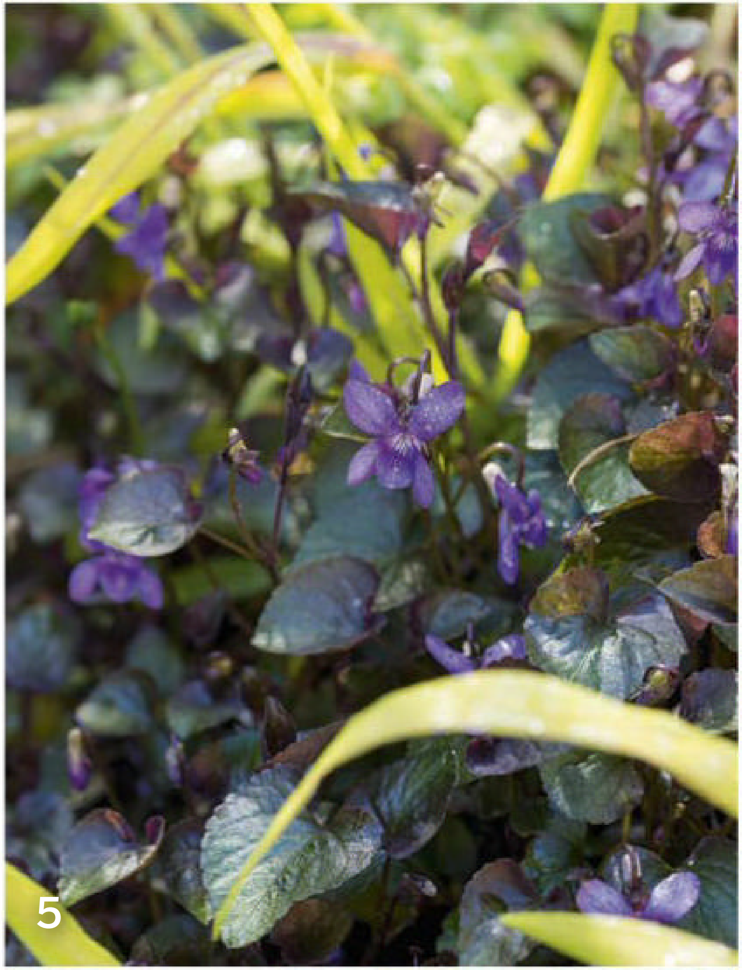
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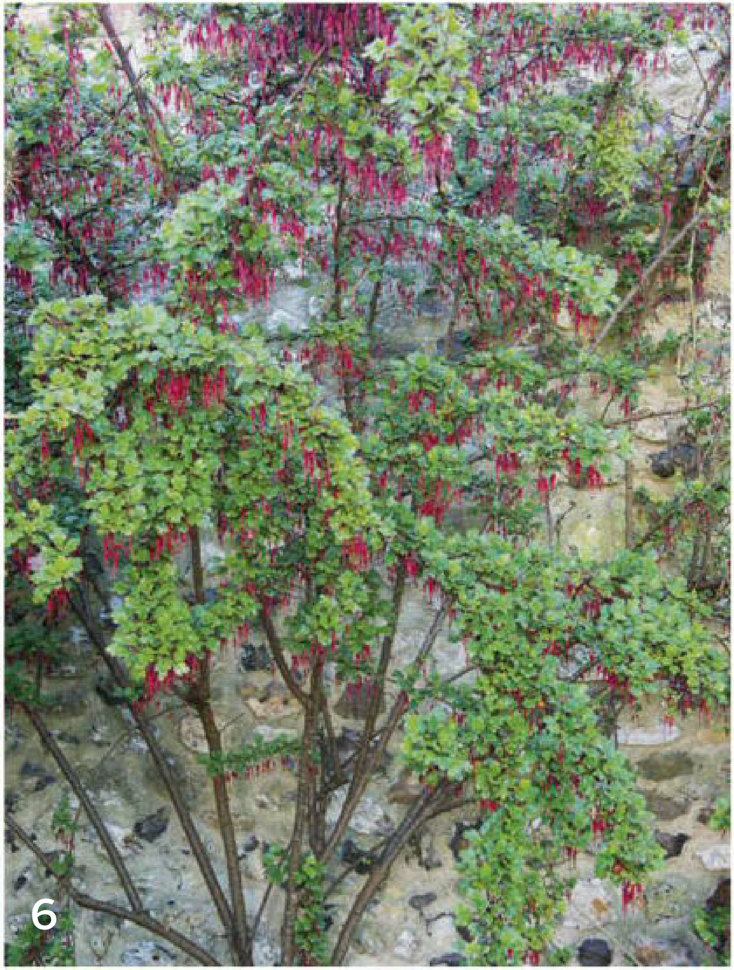
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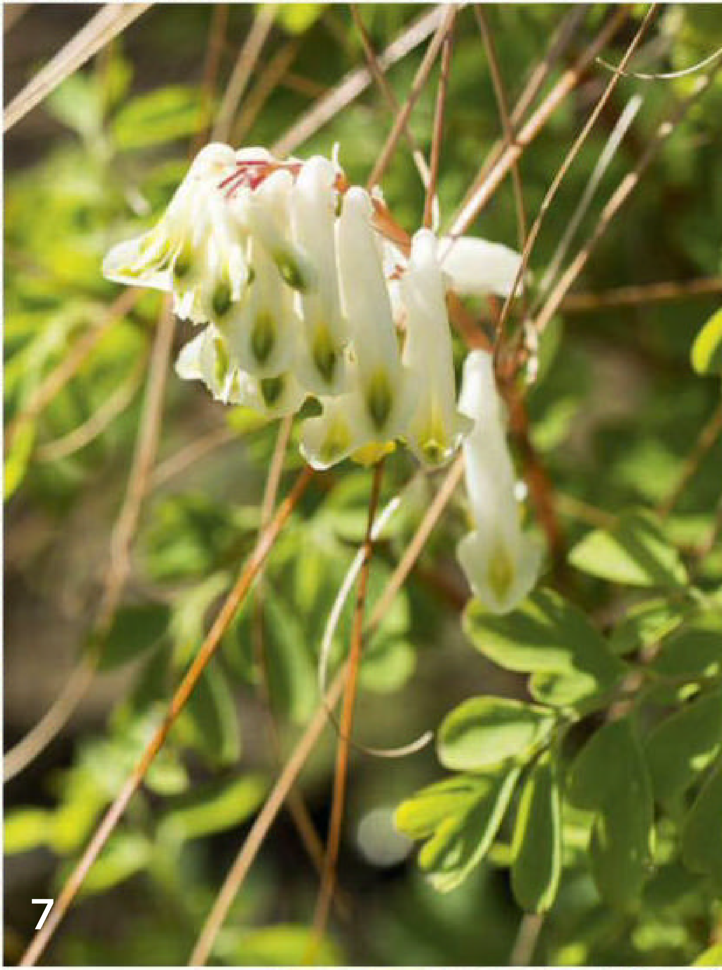
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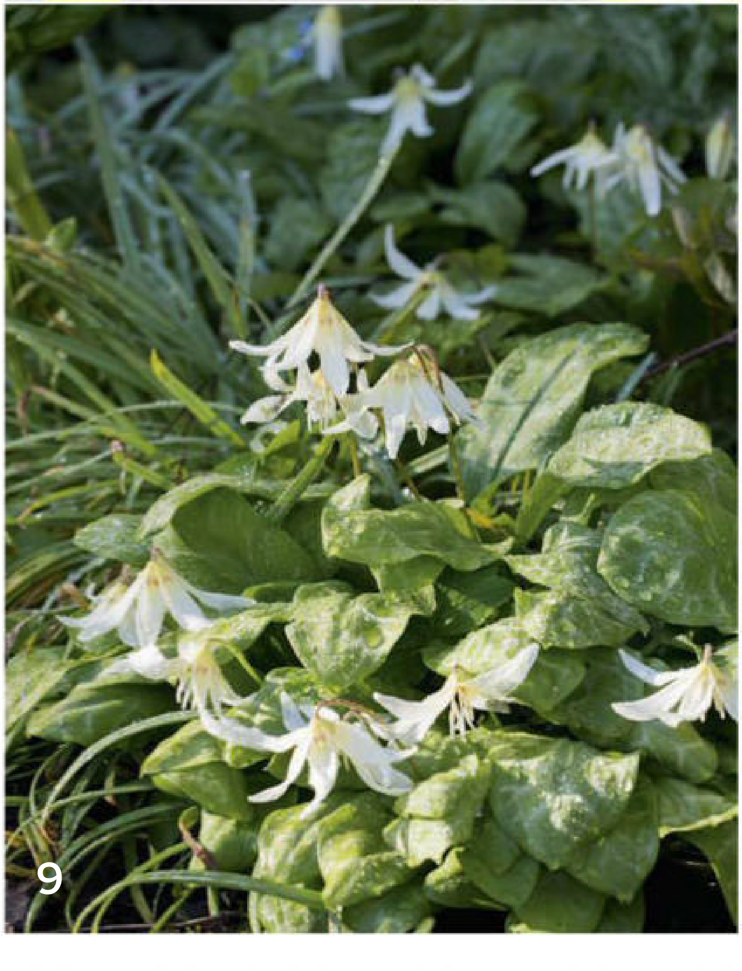
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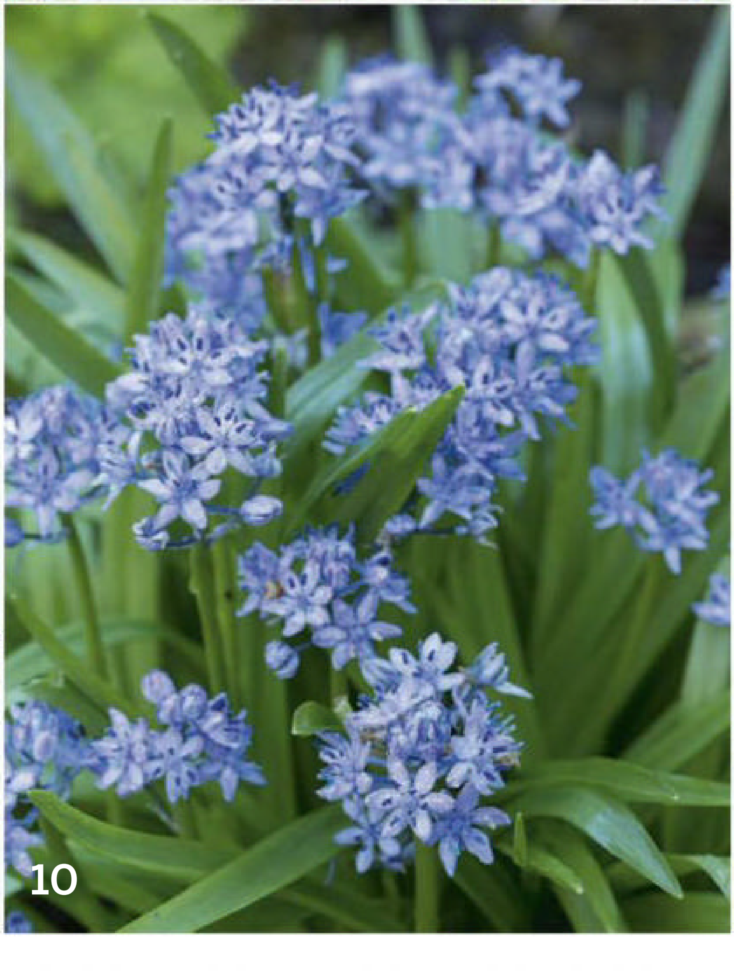
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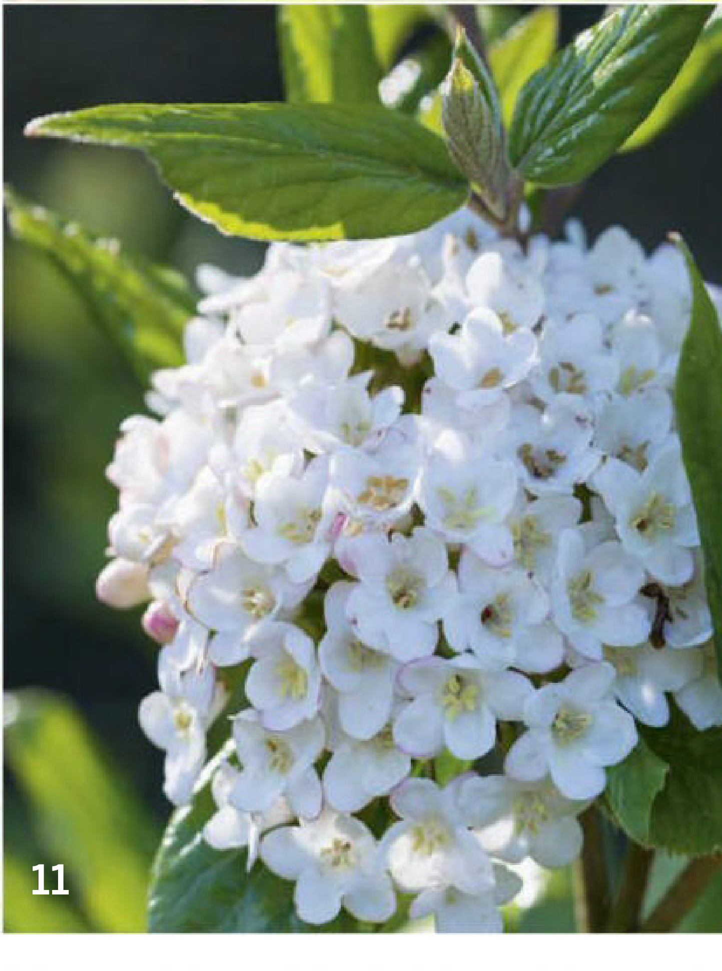
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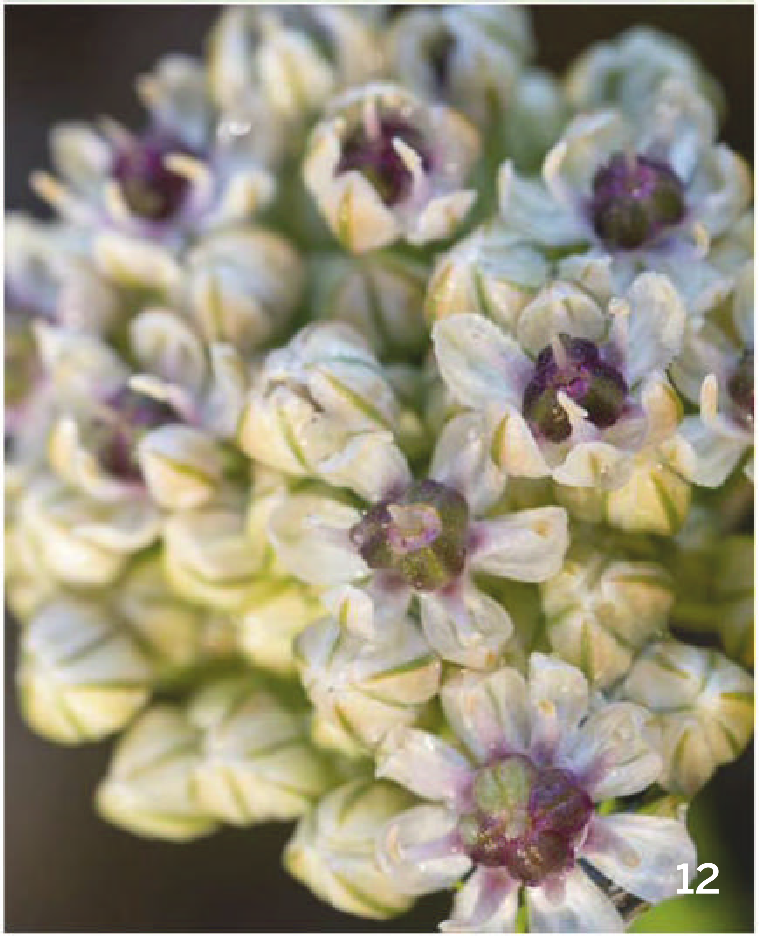

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GROWING PLANTS FROM SEED

Plants are allowed to seed in Frith Old Farmhouse garden to fill in the gaps. Those that self-seed include *Lilium martagon*, *Lilium monadelphum*, *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, *Melittis melissophyllum*, *Trillium kurabayashii*, *Glaucium flavum* f. *fulvum* and *Jeffersonia dubia*.

Growing from seed is a good way to produce plants in numbers. Trilliums, hellebores and other members of the buttercup family need to be sown fresh, as soon as possible after collection. Be patient, as peonies and trilliums take two years to appear and bulb seedlings should be left for three years or more before attempting to prick out. After sowing in seed compost, label and cover seeds with a thin layer of grit, and leave outdoors and exposed to the elements during winter to stratify and break dormancy. At times, germination can be erratic; Gill often waits several years before deciding to discard pots because the seedlings have not appeared.

Some plants, however, are so successful that they may become too prolific, such as *Allium siculum*, *Meconopsis cambrica*, *Geranium nodosum*, *Geranium* x *oxonianum* and *Eryngium giganteum*. To keep numbers under control, remove the seedheads before the seeds are shed or take out unwanted seedlings.

24 KEY PLANTS FROM FRITH OLD FARMHOUSE

1 *Osmanthus delavayi*
A reliable, dainty-leaved evergreen shrub whose small clusters of flowers produce a welcome early scent. It responds well to pruning and is easy to grow. 2m x 2m. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 7a-9b†.

2 *Cardamine pentaphylla*
A herbaceous perennial with spikes of large, pale-purple or white flowers in spring above attractive leaves. Robust yet beautiful. 50cm x 50cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

3 *Uvularia grandiflora*
The combination of yellow and fresh green in this herbaceous perennial is cheerful in spring, when the light shines through the petals. 1m x 50cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

4 *Euphorbia mellifera*
A desirable herbaceous plant for its fabulous scent and architectural form, the gorgeous, fragrant, honey-coloured flowers are really attractive. 2.5m x 2.5m. AGM. RHS H3. USDA 9a-11.

5 *Viola riviniana* Purpurea Group
With its pale-mauve flowers and purple-tinted leaves, this plant contrasts well with *Milium effusum* 'Aureum', but should be kept under control as it soon becomes a weed. USDA 3a-11.

6 *Ribes speciosum*
Grown on a sheltered west wall at Frith Old Farmhouse, but can be free-standing in a sheltered spot. Beautifully elegant, with fuchsia-like flowers over a long period. 2.5m x 1.5m. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

7 *Corydalis ochroleuca*
An evergreen that always looks good, the white flowers are tipped with bright yellow. It is a good gap-filler without smothering; easy in sun or partial shade. 30cm x 30cm. USDA 5a-7b.

8 *Trillium cuneatum*
Peter and Gill grow this from seed and retain the best forms. The flowers are dark red-brown and stemless, and the leaves are mottled brown. 30cm (spreading). USDA 5a-8b.

9 *Erythronium californicum* 'White Beauty'
An easy plant, growing happily at Frith Old Farmhouse in unimproved clay. It is an ideal first plant for anyone who wants to start growing dog's tooth violets. 30cm x 15cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b.

10 *Scilla liliohyacinthus*
Forms a good clump of bright-green leaves with massed spikes of wonderful blue flowers that always catch the eye. Increases slowly, but is very reliable. 30cm (spreading). USDA 5a-8b.

11 *Viburnum* x *burkwoodii*
A medium-sized evergreen shrub, producing clusters of white flowers that appear from pink buds from January to June with a strong, pleasant scent. 2.5m x 2.5m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

12 *Allium* 'Silver Spring'
Sweetly scented flowers from late spring to early summer.Best planted under deciduous trees, so it is not shaded when flowering. 70-90cm. RHS H5.

• Turn the page for more key plants

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ pure-white flowers backed by dark-purple young leaves from April to June. “I was overjoyed when *Paeonia daurica* subsp. *tomentosa* first bloomed and disappointed when it didn’t return the following year,” reveals Gill. “We saw it growing in a shady spot on a hillside in Iran, came home and planted another seedling in an area where drainage was better; it has flourished and flowered so I am happy again. And after seeing *Fritillaria imperialis* growing on free-draining mountainsides in Iran, we moved our yellow ones to the flint ridge; the red ones are at the base of the *Paulownia* where the soil is dry.”

Most plants in the garden have been grown from seed, and the societies the couple so avidly supports have become a prolific source. “Seed lists and swaps from specialist gardens unearth some real treasures and the appearance of seedling never ceases to be an exciting event,” says Peter. The propagating area is filled with pots and trays of seeds, which also provide material for open days. In 2018, the garden was awash with over 200 flowering stems of *Lilium martagon*, produced mainly from self-sown seed. “It’s the combination of interests that makes our partnership so enjoyable,” says Peter. “We approach the subject from different angles, but in the end it’s all about the plants.” □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Frith Old Farmhouse, Frith Road, Otterden, Faversham, Kent ME13 0DD.
Open The garden opens under the National Garden Scheme on 28 April and 19 May 2019, 11am-5pm, admission £5, **ngs.org.uk**. Also open by arrangement from 1 April – 30 September 2019: peter.regan@cantab.net

24 KEY PLANTS CONTINUED

13 *Geranium phaeum* ‘Samobor’
Introduced by Elizabeth Strangman, these are quiet plants with dark flowers and attractive, dark-purple blotching on the leaves. Ideal for dry shade. 60cm x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

14 *Anemone ranunculoides*
Bright and cheerful in a shady spot, this spring-flowering anemone has dainty yellow flowers dotted over beautiful textured foliage. 10cm x 50cm. AGM. RHS H6.

15 *Beesia calthifolia*
Beautifully patterned, glossy leaves that look as though they have been dipped in varnish and look good all year round. 30cm x 20cm. USDA 6a-8b.

16 *Polygonatum* x *hybridum*
A stately, elegant plant, with attractive creamy-green flowers. Look out for sawfly, which feed at the tips, and pick them off. 1.5m x 50cm. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

17 *Cardamine heptaphylla*
Grows happily at Frith Old Farmhouse under a witch hazel. Easy to grow, the pretty sprays of white spring flowers resemble the wildflower lady’s smock. 50cm x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

18 *Fritillaria acmopetala*
The wonderful green and maroon bell-like flowers are unusual but attractive. Grows happily at the base of one of the garden’s shrubs where it is dry. 30cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.

19 *Lamium orvala*
This species is valuable for its beautiful leaves and dusky-pink flowers. There is considerable variation in flower and leaf; seedlings are selected carefully. 60cm x 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 6a-10b.

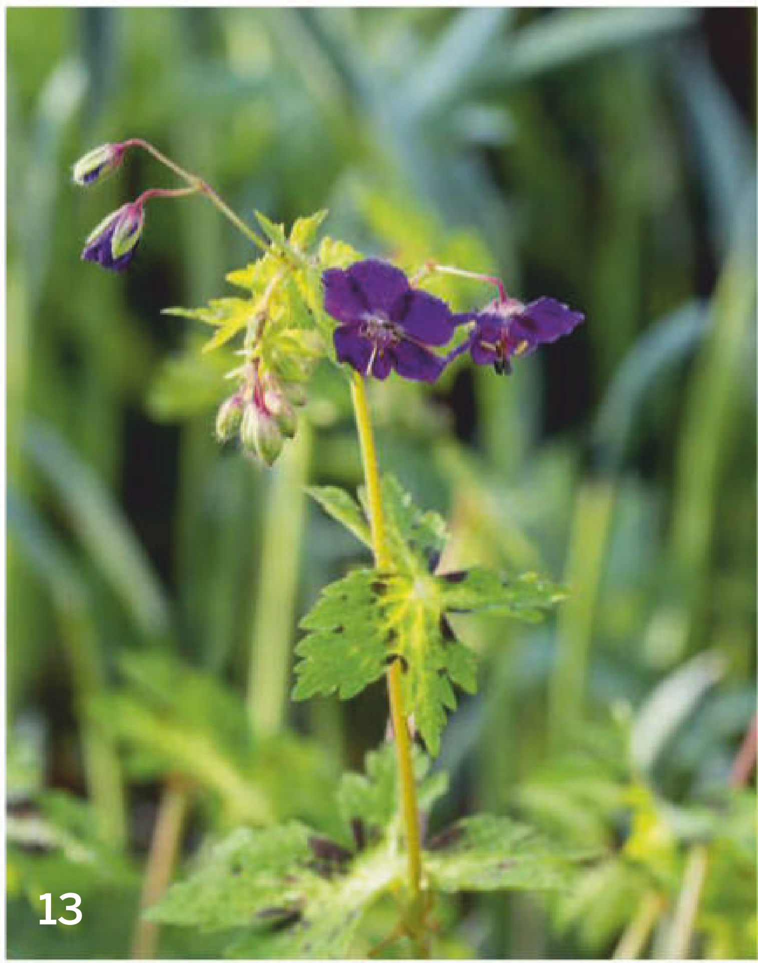
20 *Corydalis heterocarpa*
A biennial with big flowers for a corydalis. It self-seeds at Frith Old Farmhouse, growing against a north-facing wall, in organic rich soil. 60cm x 30cm.

21 *Daphne mezereum*
Short-lived, but self-seeding, with a welcome early fragrance. The red berries are more attractive than those on the yellow-berried form. 1.5m x 1m. RHS H6, USDA 4a-7b.

22 *Erythronium* ‘Pagoda’
An easy plant, with mottled, rich-green leaves and nodding, creamy-yellow flowers. Grows anywhere in shade with organic rich soil. 50cm x 10cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.

23 *Lathyrus vernus*
Always brightens the garden with its fresh green leaves and gorgeous purple flowers in early spring. Peter and Gill have a blue and pale-pink bloomed selection. 50cm x 50cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

24 *Allium ursinum*
A weed to many as wild garlic, but here introduced intentionally. Other plants keeps it under control but Peter and Gill also look out for and remove seedlings. 50cm x 50cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.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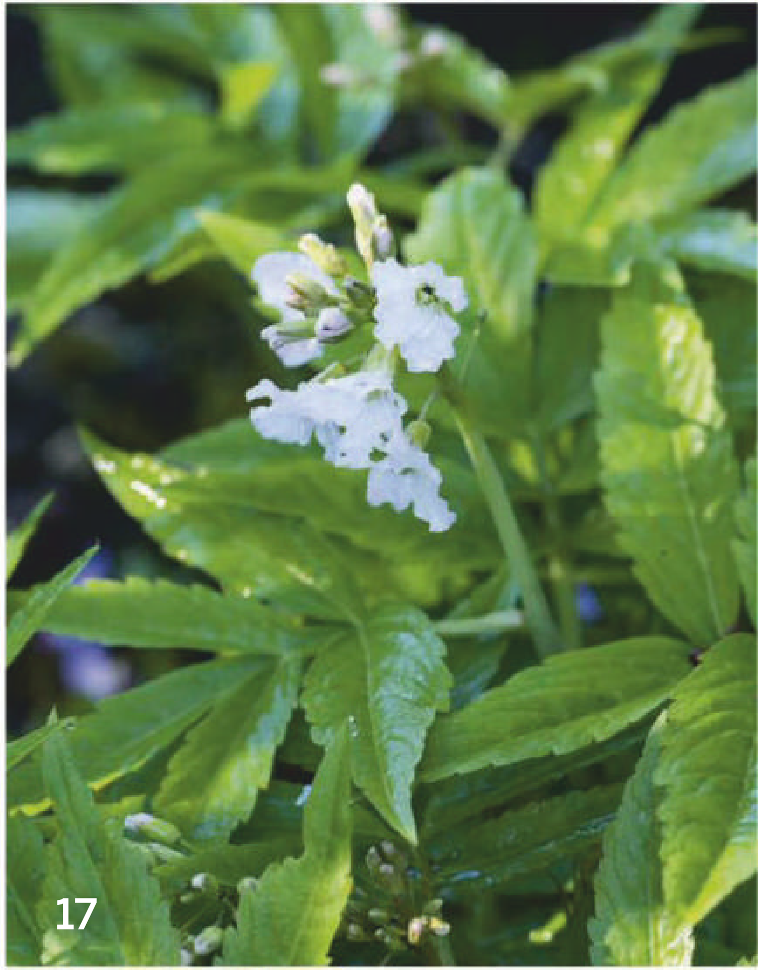
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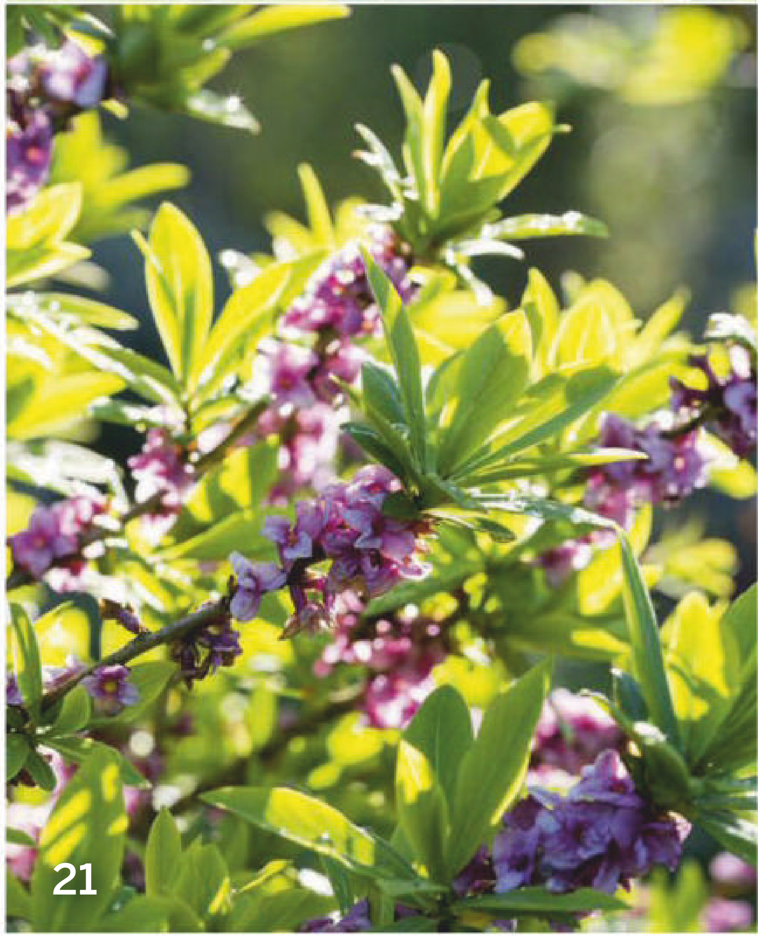
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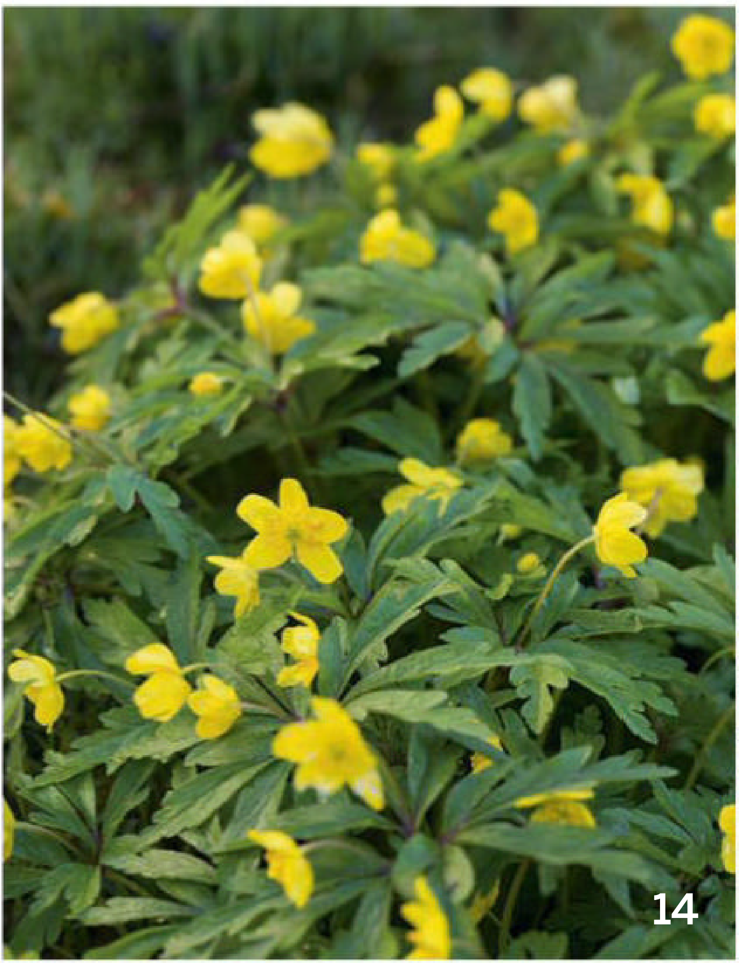
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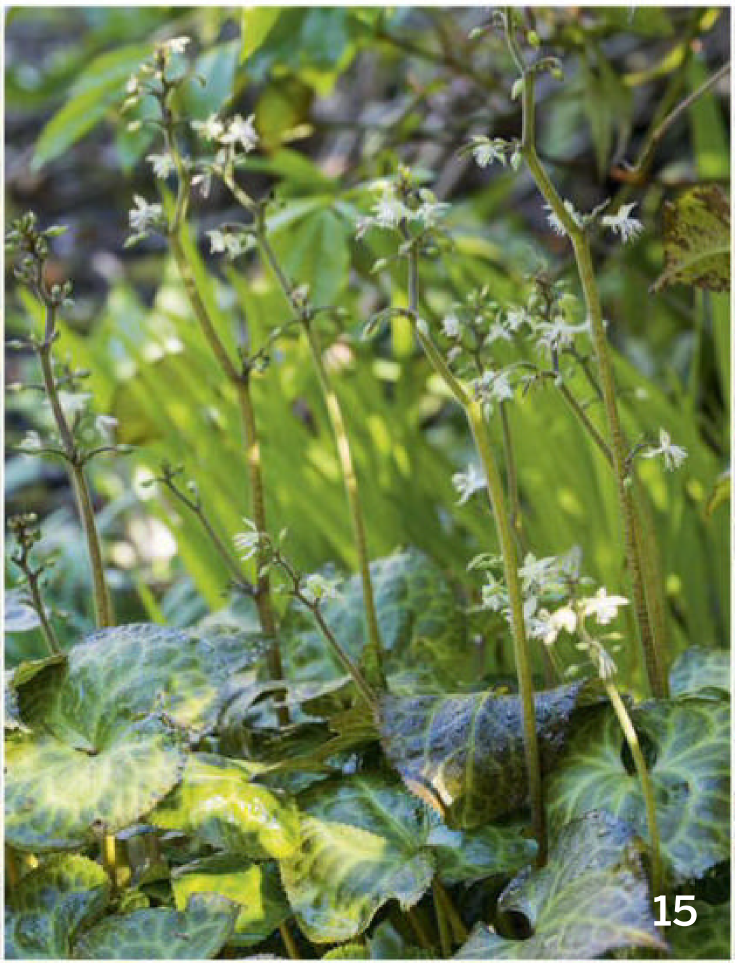
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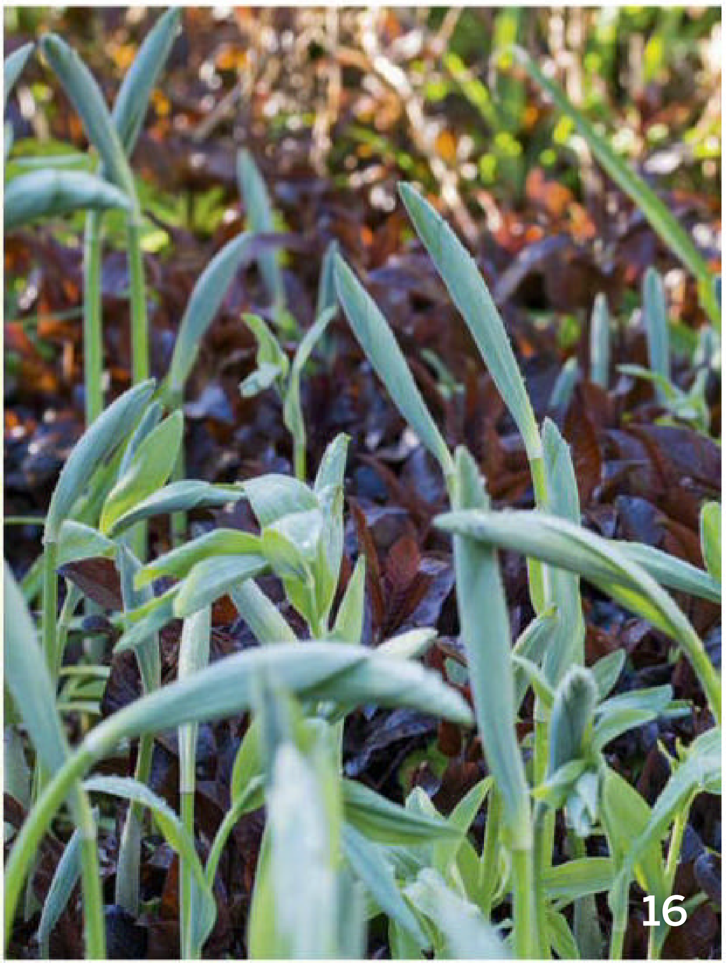
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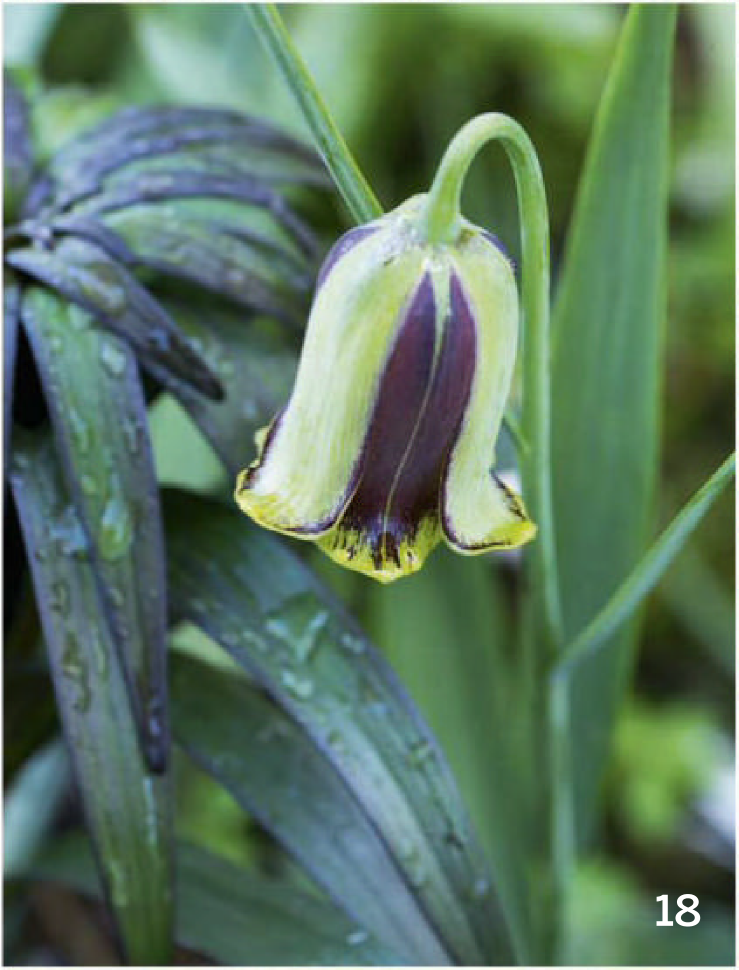
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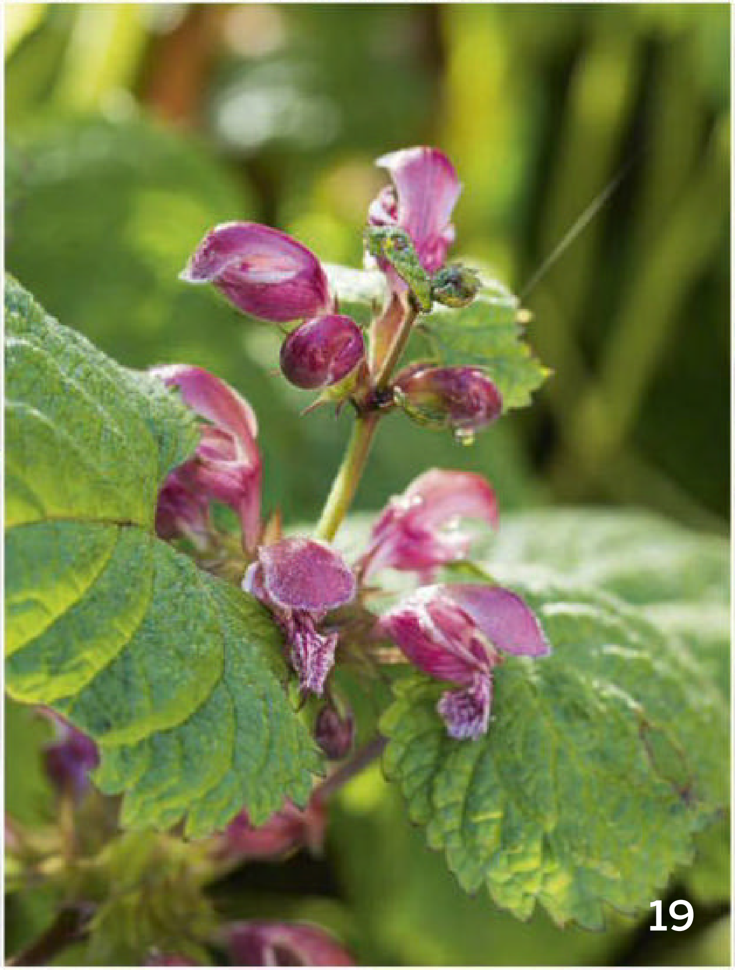
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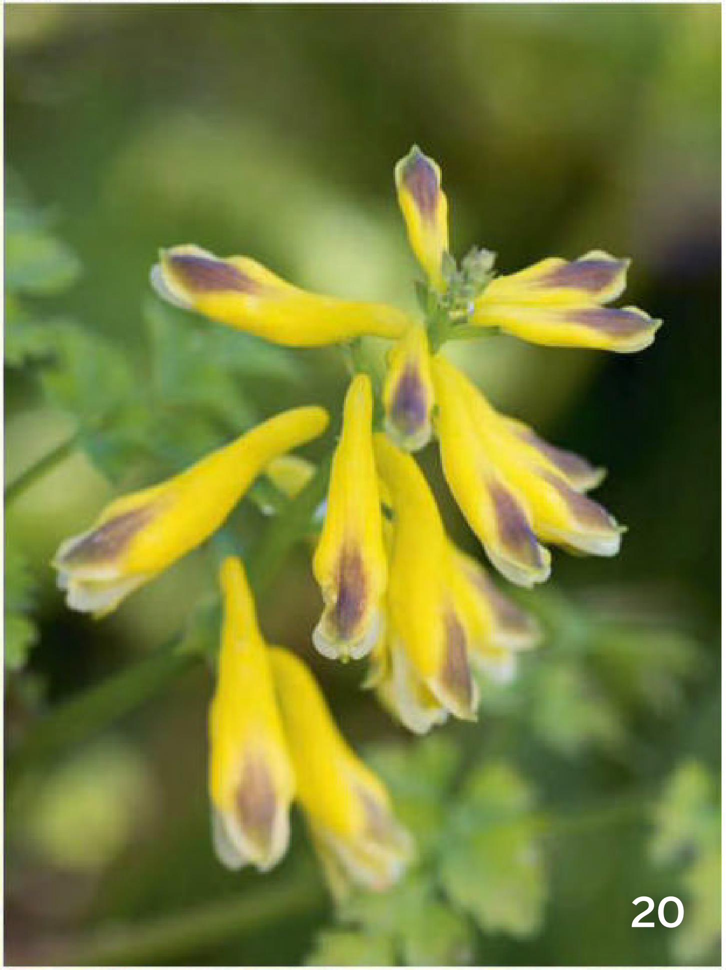
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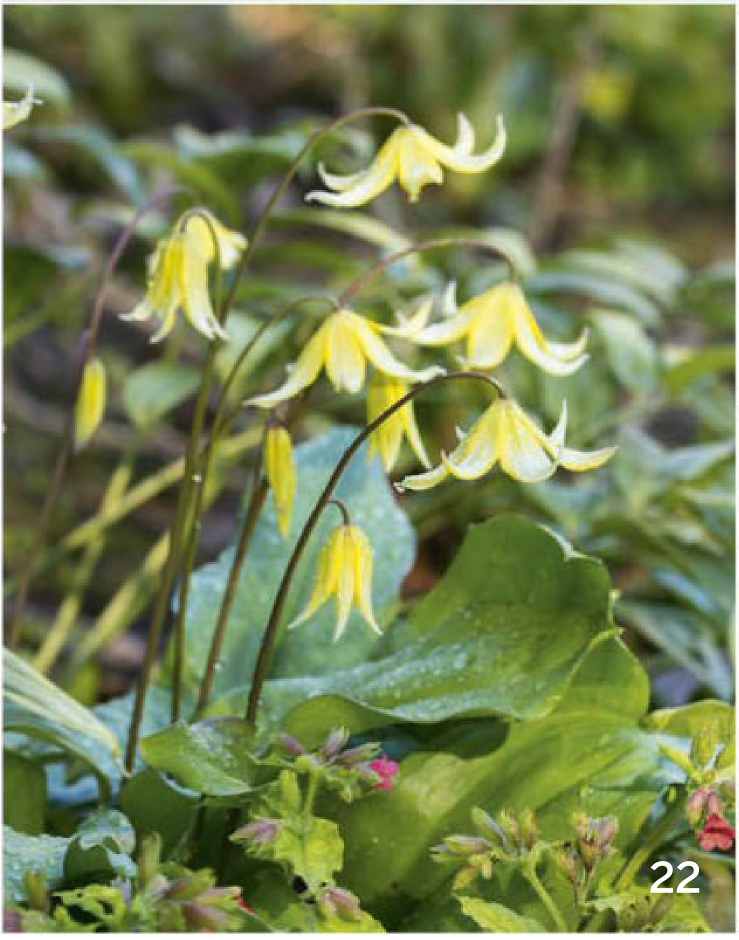
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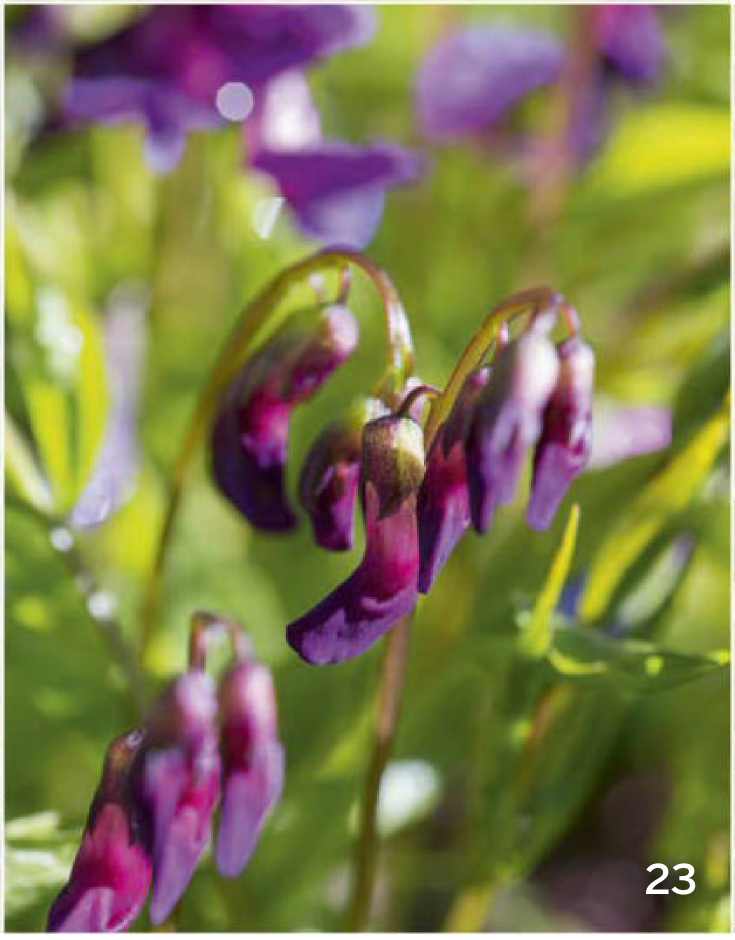
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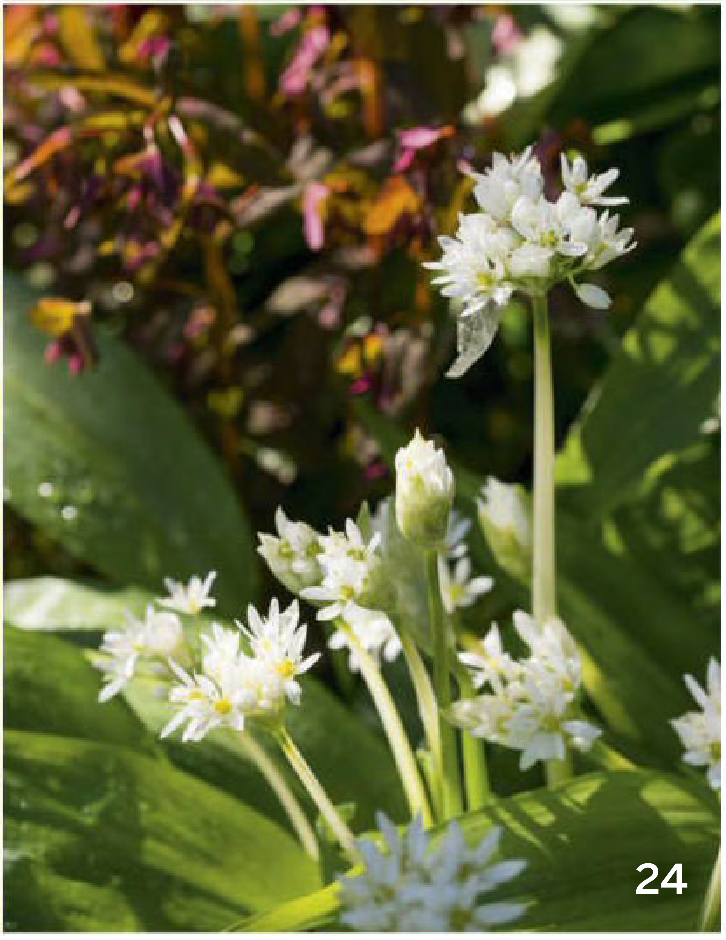
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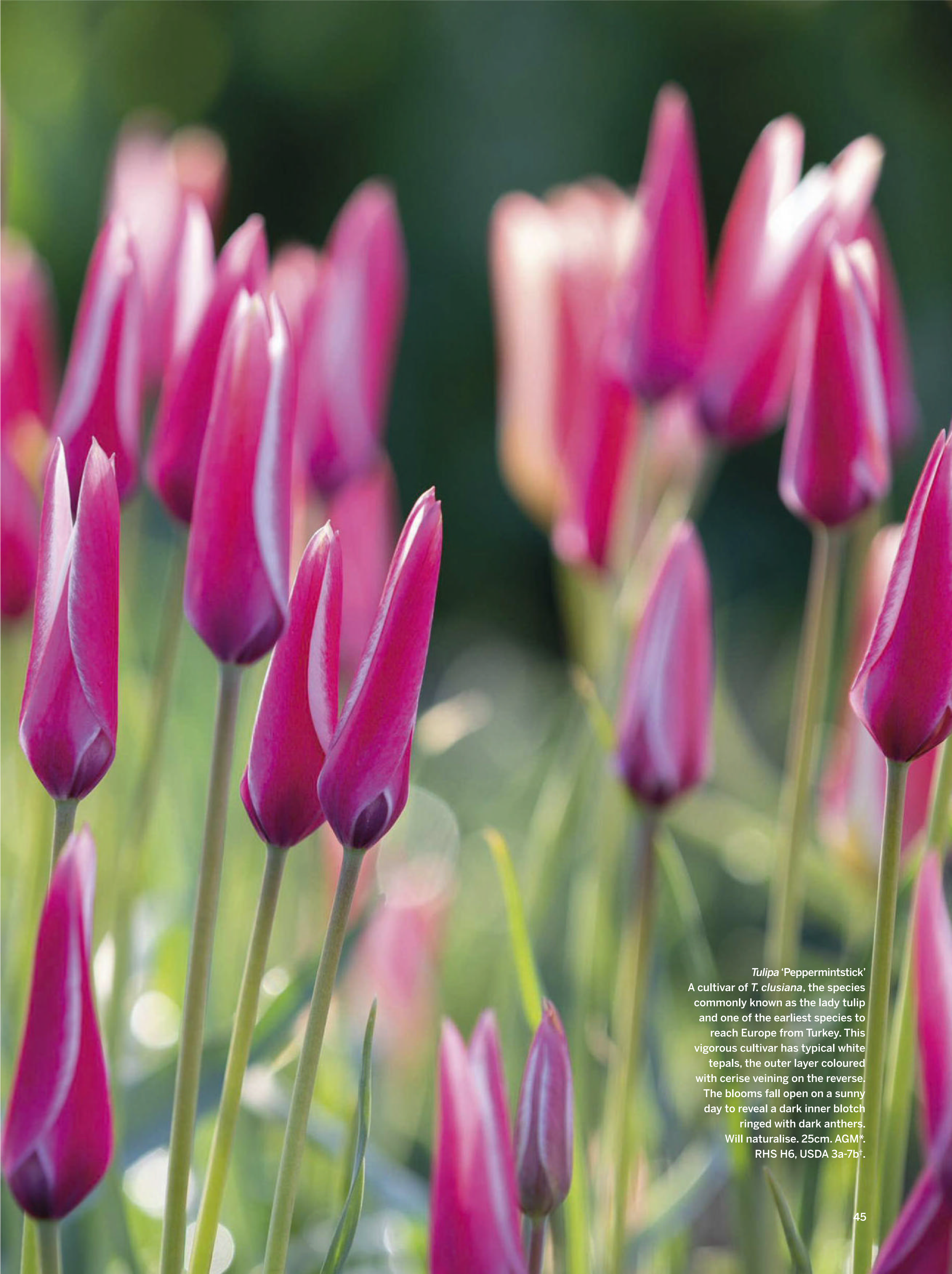
SPECIES TULIPS

Species tulips and their cultivars are the diminutive cousins of modern hybrids, offering a more refined and perennial display

WORDS **JONNY BRUCE** PHOTOGRAPHS **RICHARD BLOOM**



Tulipa 'Peppermintstick'
A cultivar of *T. clusiana*, the species commonly known as the lady tulip and one of the earliest species to reach Europe from Turkey. This vigorous cultivar has typical white tepals, the outer layer coloured with cerise veining on the reverse. The blooms fall open on a sunny day to reveal a dark inner blotch ringed with dark anthers. Will naturalise. 25cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-7b†.

The annual planting of tulip bulbs has become a treasured ritual for many gardeners who excitedly anticipate the emergence of these brightest heralds of spring. While little can rival the brilliance of modern hybrids for size and variety of colour, many of the wild species and their cultivars offer a refined and, in many cases, more perennial display. There is a growing appreciation for these diminutive ancestors, which have been variously dismissed as difficult to grow or lacking garden worthiness. Hailing predominantly from the dry slopes of central Asia and the Mediterranean, many wild tulips unfortunately resent the soggy climate of much of northern Europe. However, there are a rewarding number of adaptable species that deserve a place in the garden.

An excellent place to see these unusual blooms is at the Hortus Bulborum in the Netherlands. Located just north of Amsterdam, in the small town of Limmen, this four-acre garden with its collection of historic bulbs laid out in orderly rows, provides a welcome respite from the teeming crowds of nearby Keukenhof. Better known for its collection of cultivated tulips dating back to the earliest Dutch cultivars, the Hortus Bulborum also boasts an impressive collection of species tulips.

It is unlikely that the first tulips to enter Europe in the 16th century from Constantinople (modern day Istanbul) were wild species, but rather hybrids. The fascination of the Turkish royal court with breeding tulips was well established. Such was the pride these breeders took in their work that individual flowers were captured in illustrated manuscripts and given honorific titles, such as ‘the one that gives light’. This name was bestowed on a perfect yellow ‘needle’ tulip with remarkable pointed tepals, a form much celebrated in the Turkish court but which never caught on in northern Europe – Dutch and British breeders preferring a more full-bodied bloom.

While most modern hybrids reflect the European taste for generous bowl shapes, *Tulipa* ‘Cornuta’ (right) goes some way in evoking the Turkish style, with its sharply pointed, needle-like tepals that are flamed with red and yellow. Although *T.* ‘Cornuta’ does not exist in nature, and is almost certainly an old hybrid of Turkish origin, its curious form warrants inclusion in a collection of wild species. Like most tulips, this plant enjoys sun and a free-draining soil but if these basic requirements are met it is relatively easy to grow.

Easier still is *T. sprengeri*, which seems to prefer a damper soil and will happily tolerate some degree of shade. This long-lived tulip is the latest to flower producing a flash of red often into June. While a student at Great Dixter I would admire a venerable clump that has lived for years among the toes of *Fuchsia* ‘Riccartonii’. In late winter the fuchsia is stool pruned allowing the tulip to flower through its emerging foliage. As the tulip fades the fuchsia rapidly takes over cloaking the yellowing tulip leaves and producing flowers that last through the season. A straddling *Clematis* x *durandii*, which climbs through the fuchsia, completes this remarkably simple but effective succession.

T. sprengeri is also one of the few self-sowers, shown to great effect at Spetchley Park Gardens in Worcestershire where they flower by the thousand More commonly tulips spread by stolons. *T. sylvestris*, the star-like *T. tarda* and *T. saxatilis* Bakeri Group all spread effectively by this method and in the case of *T. sylvestris*, its stoloniferous vigour has allowed it to become naturalised in Britain and as far north as Sweden.

Most wild tulips can’t be so easily worked into a border but I’m yet to see a species tulip that looks out of place in a rock or gravel garden. Species tulips also make rewarding pot specimens where watering and feeding can be more rigorously controlled. While we shouldn’t abandon the glorious displays of their gaudy hybrid descendants, there is not a single garden that could not find place for at least one of these jewel-like flowers. ❑

• Author Jonny Bruce is a gardener and garden writer. His recommendations for the best species tulips and their cultivars can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What The diminutive ancestors of our modern tulips.

Origins Around 76 species occurring in southwestern Europe, North Africa and central Asia. Many species have been naturalised in Europe and western Asia for centuries.

Season These spring bulbs tend to bloom earlier in gardens than in the wild, but will emerge variously from March through May. All species are summer dormant.

Size Flowers are produced on stems up to 50cm with leaves of varying size but most species range between 10-30cm.

Conditions Almost without exception these tulips enjoy full sun, plenty of air and as good drainage as they can get. Some are more adaptable to cool, moist summers than others.

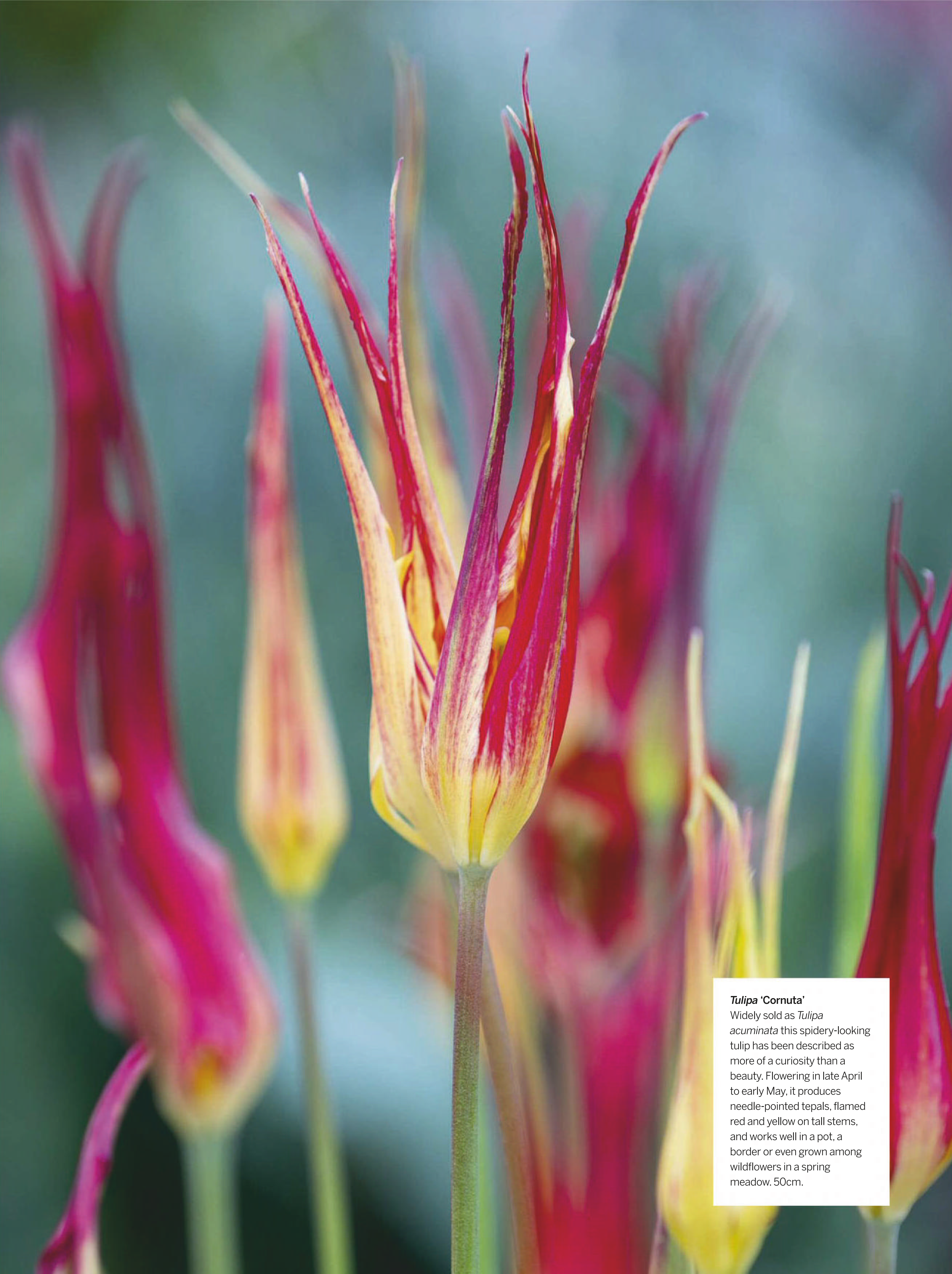
Hardiness Given sufficient drainage most species are extremely cold tolerant. A greater risk are mild, wet winters, which may rot the bulbs or result in poor flowering due to an insufficient chill period.

Taxonomy All the plant names here are based on new botanical research, at Kew and elsewhere, that has sorted out many of the concerns that this genus has been prone to over the years.

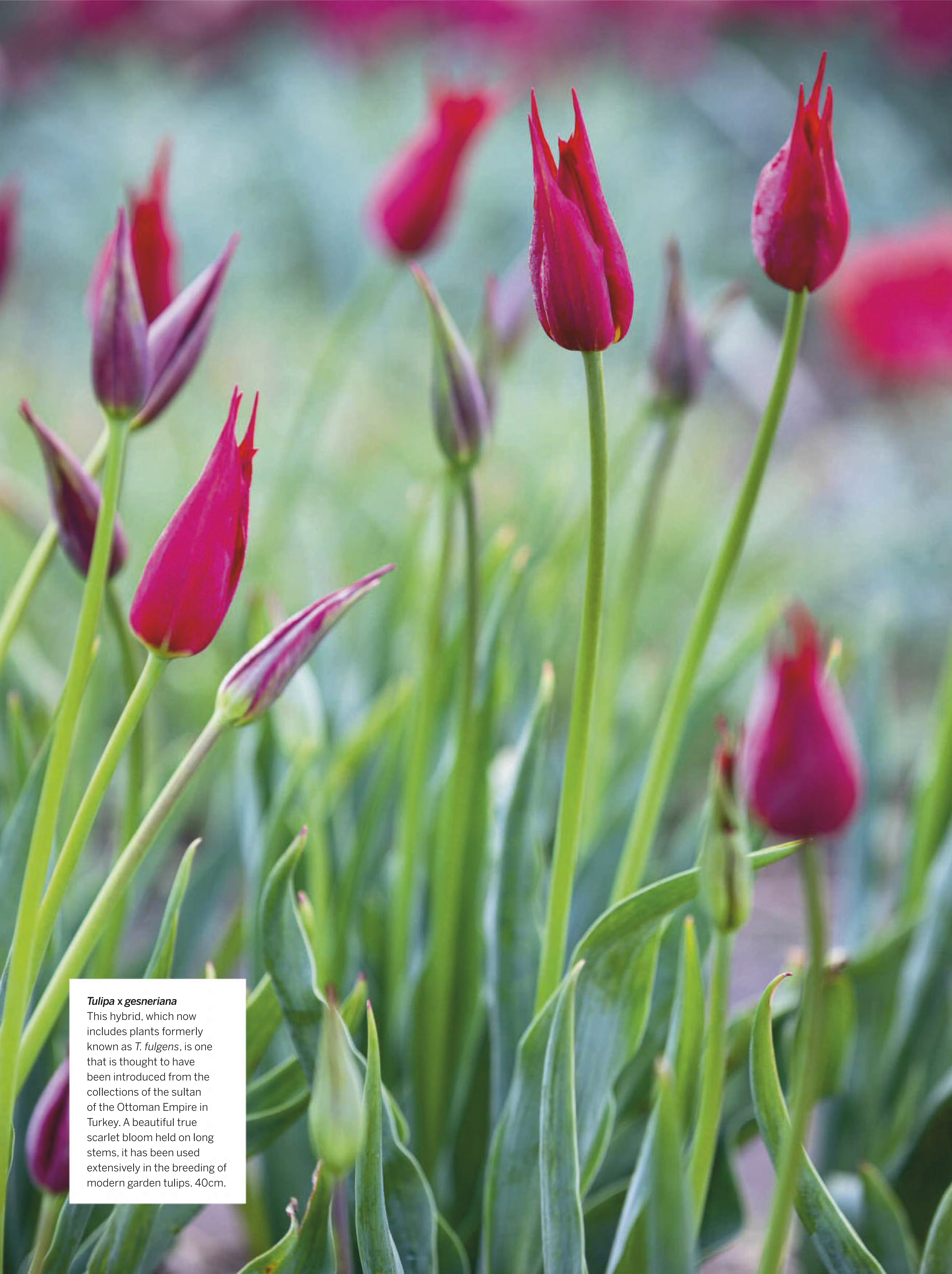
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.

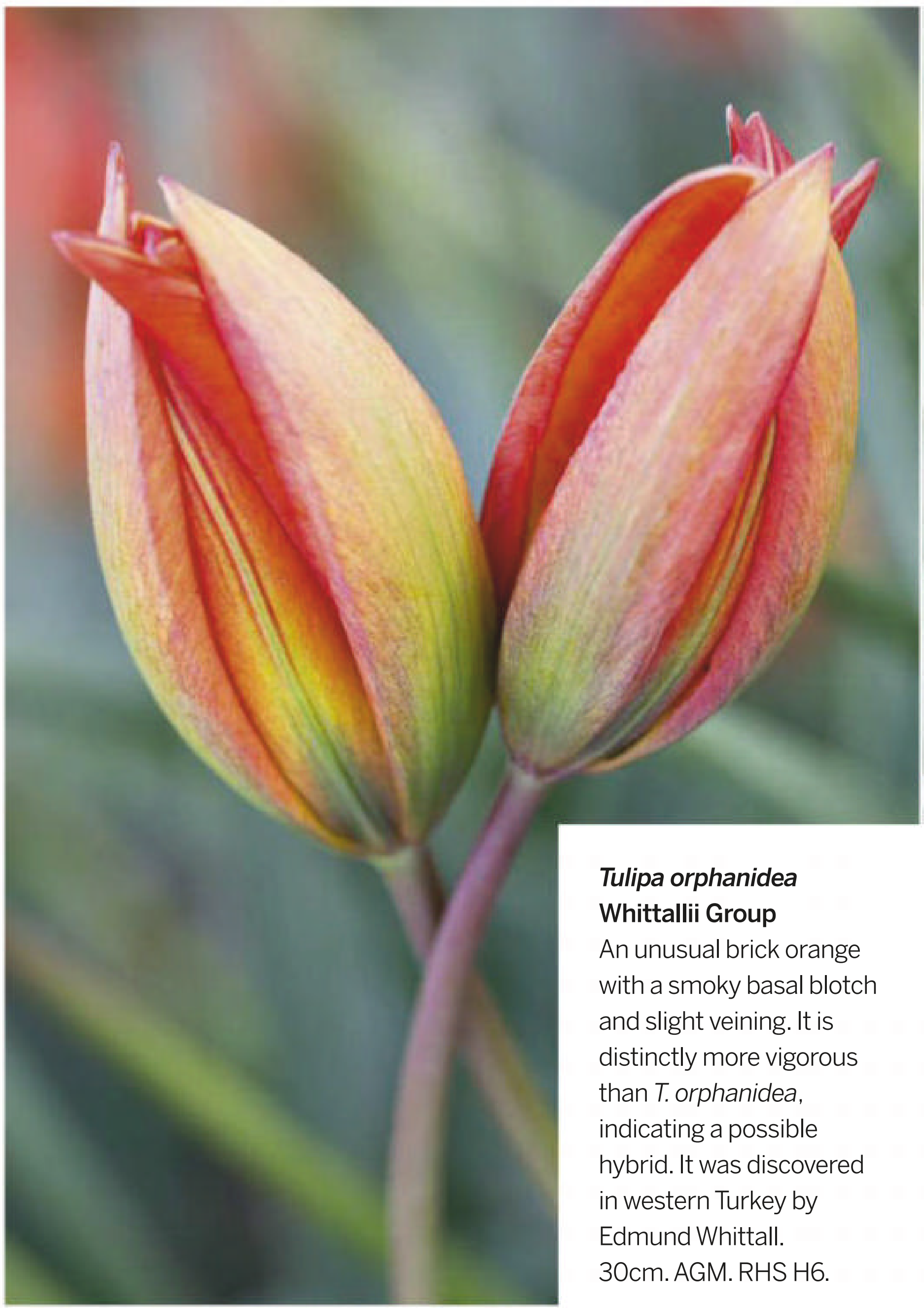
Hortus Bulborum where most of these images were taken, has one of the most diverse assortments of heritage bulbs in the world, and includes more than 2,600 tulip cultivars. The four-acre garden in the small, Dutch town of Limmen, provides a fascinating and beautiful living history of Dutch bulb breeding. **hortus-bulborum.nl**



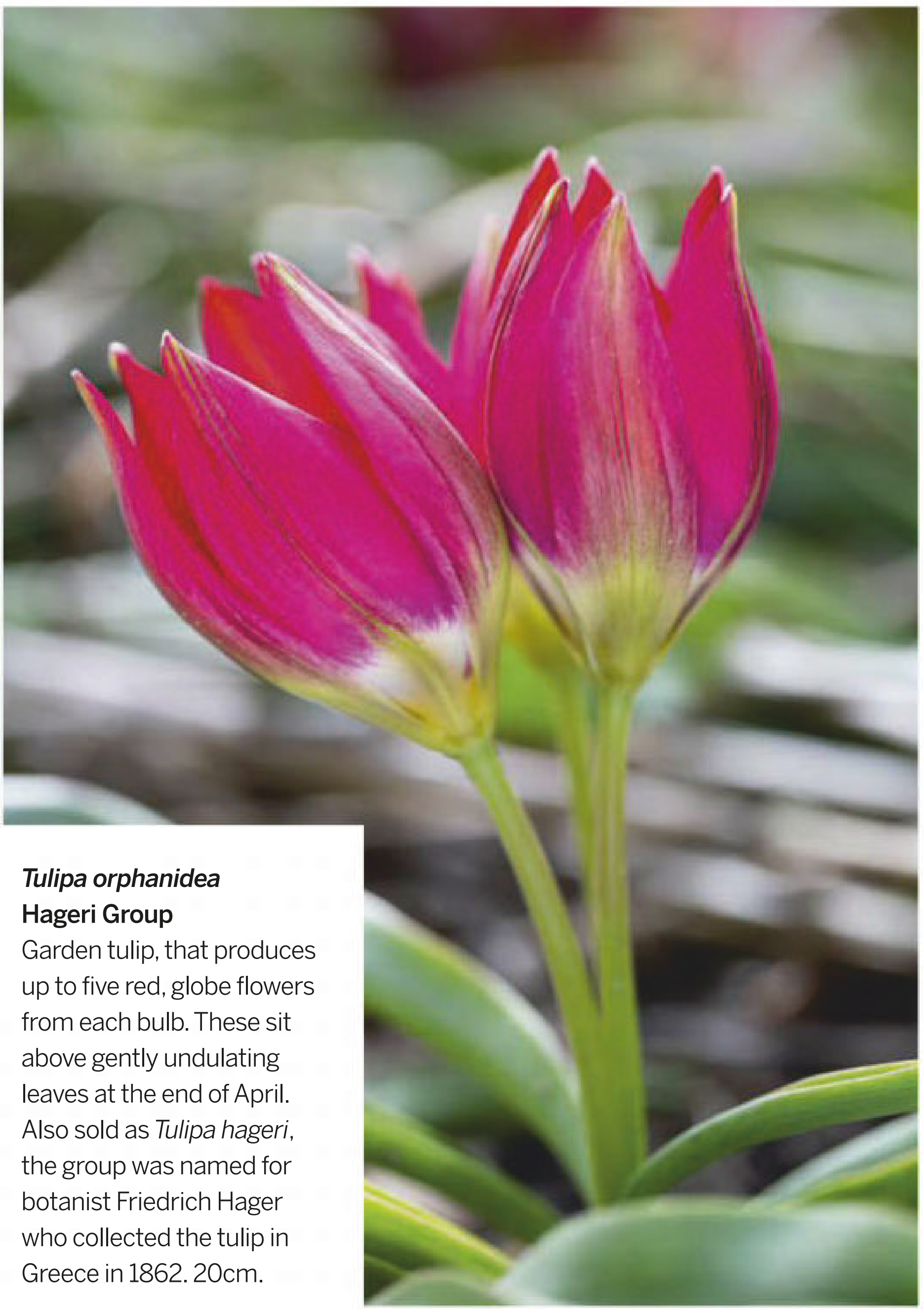
***Tulipa* 'Cornuta'**
Widely sold as *Tulipa acuminata* this spidery-looking tulip has been described as more of a curiosity than a beauty. Flowering in late April to early May, it produces needle-pointed tepals, flamed red and yellow on tall stems, and works well in a pot, a border or even grown among wildflowers in a spring meadow. 50cm.



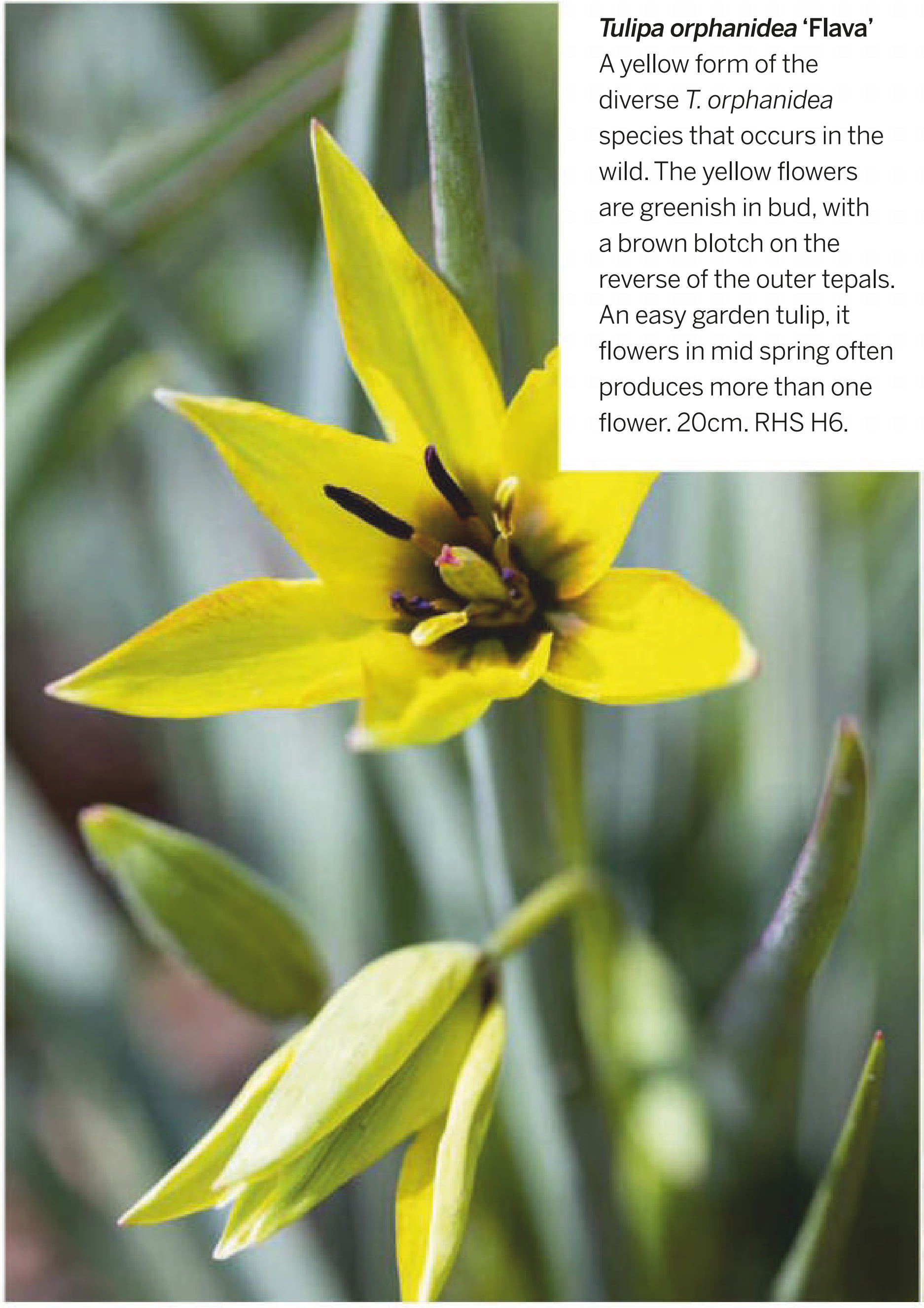
Tulipa x gesneriana
This hybrid, which now includes plants formerly known as *T. fulgens*, is one that is thought to have been introduced from the collections of the sultan of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey. A beautiful true scarlet bloom held on long stems, it has been used extensively in the breeding of modern garden tulips. 40cm.



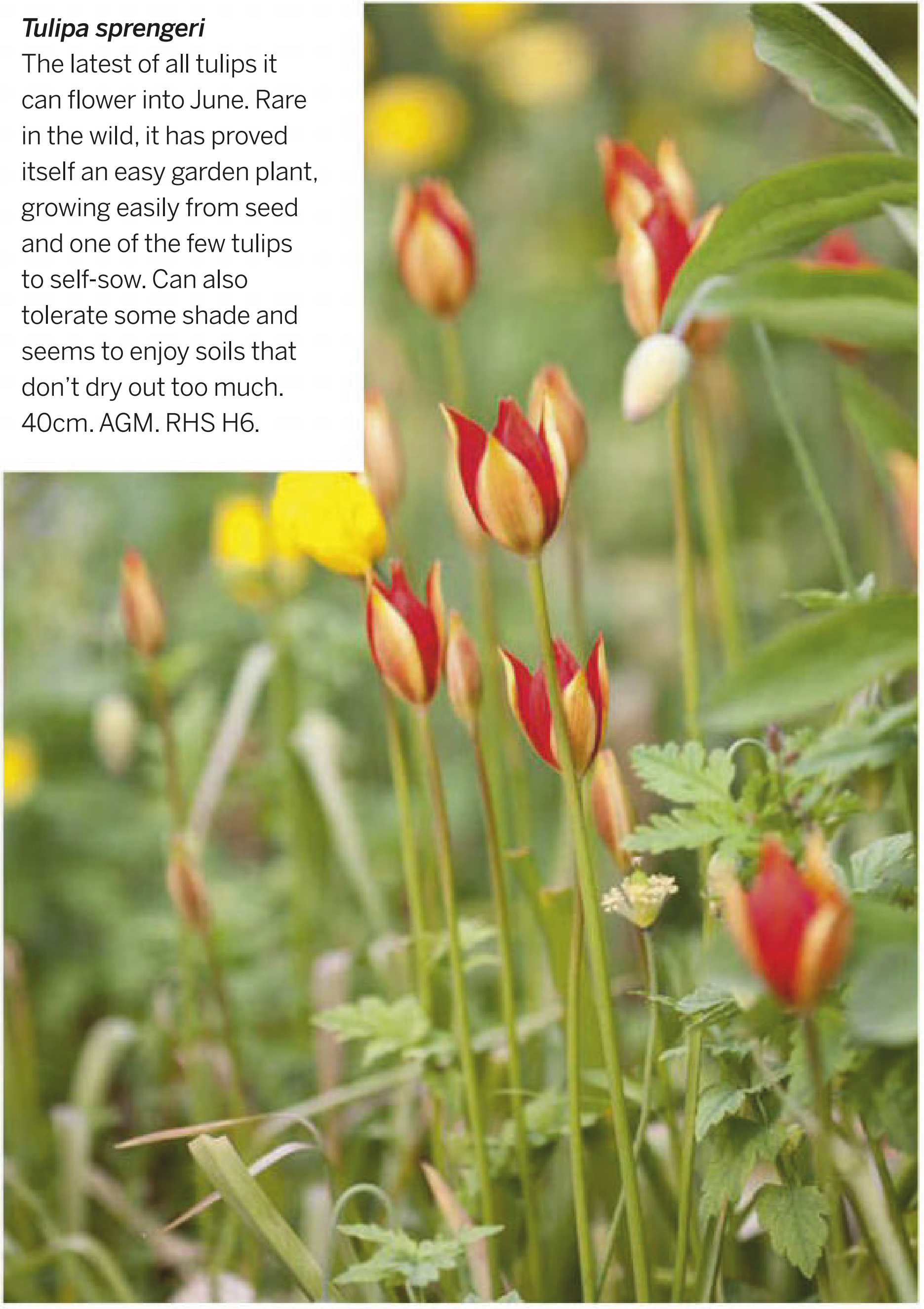
Tulipa orphanidea
Whittallii Group
An unusual brick orange with a smoky basal blotch and slight veining. It is distinctly more vigorous than *T. orphanidea*, indicating a possible hybrid. It was discovered in western Turkey by Edmund Whittall. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6.



Tulipa orphanidea
Hageri Group
Garden tulip, that produces up to five red, globe flowers from each bulb. These sit above gently undulating leaves at the end of April. Also sold as *Tulipa hageri*, the group was named for botanist Friedrich Hager who collected the tulip in Greece in 1862. 20cm.

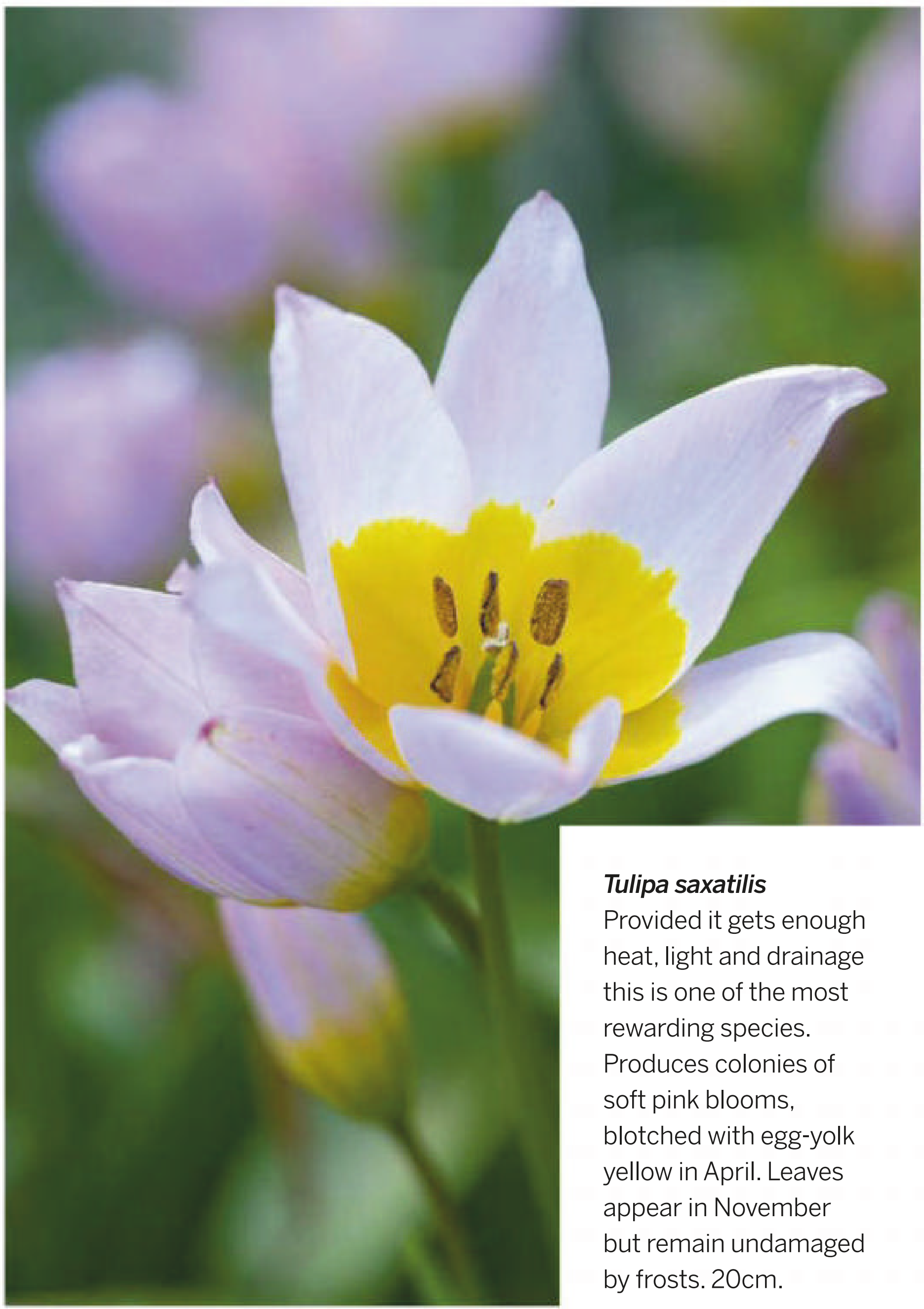


***Tulipa orphanidea* 'Flava'**
A yellow form of the diverse *T. orphanidea* species that occurs in the wild. The yellow flowers are greenish in bud, with a brown blotch on the reverse of the outer tepals. An easy garden tulip, it flowers in mid spring often produces more than one flower. 20cm. RHS H6.

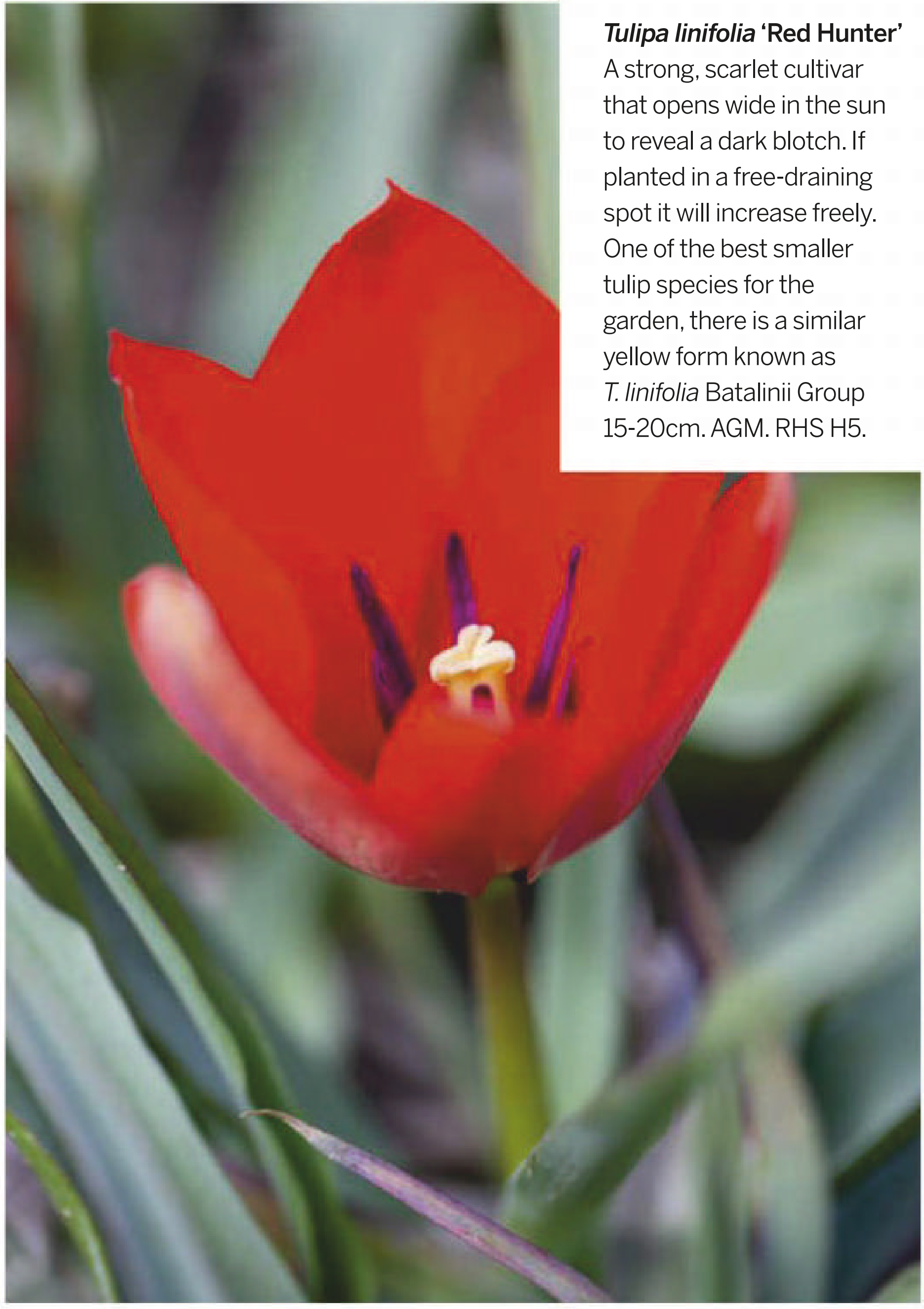


Tulipa sprengeri
The latest of all tulips it can flower into June. Rare in the wild, it has proved itself an easy garden plant, growing easily from seed and one of the few tulips to self-sow. Can also tolerate some shade and seems to enjoy soils that don't dry out too much. 40cm. AGM. RHS H6.

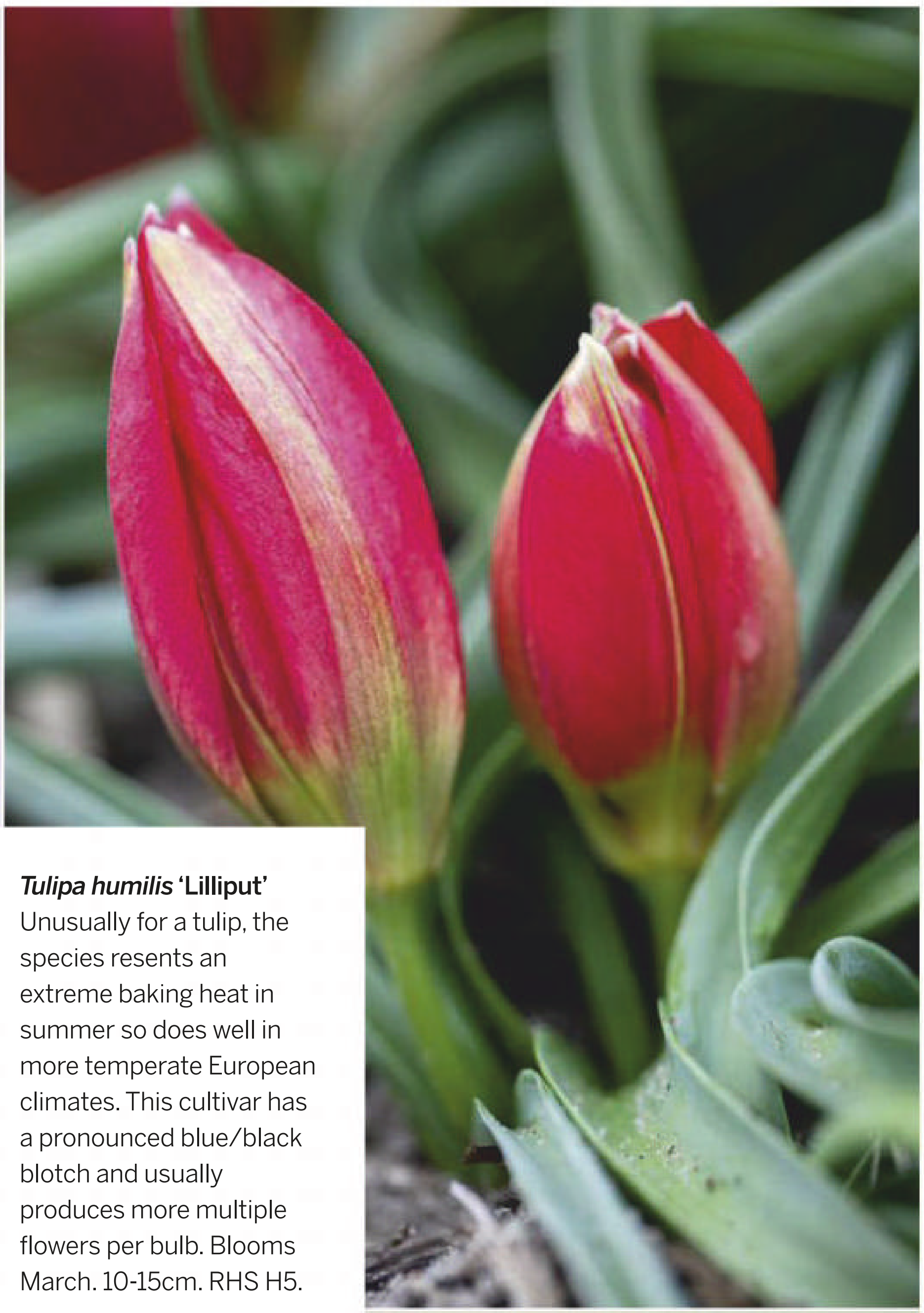
TULIPA SPRENGERI BY SHARON PEARSON



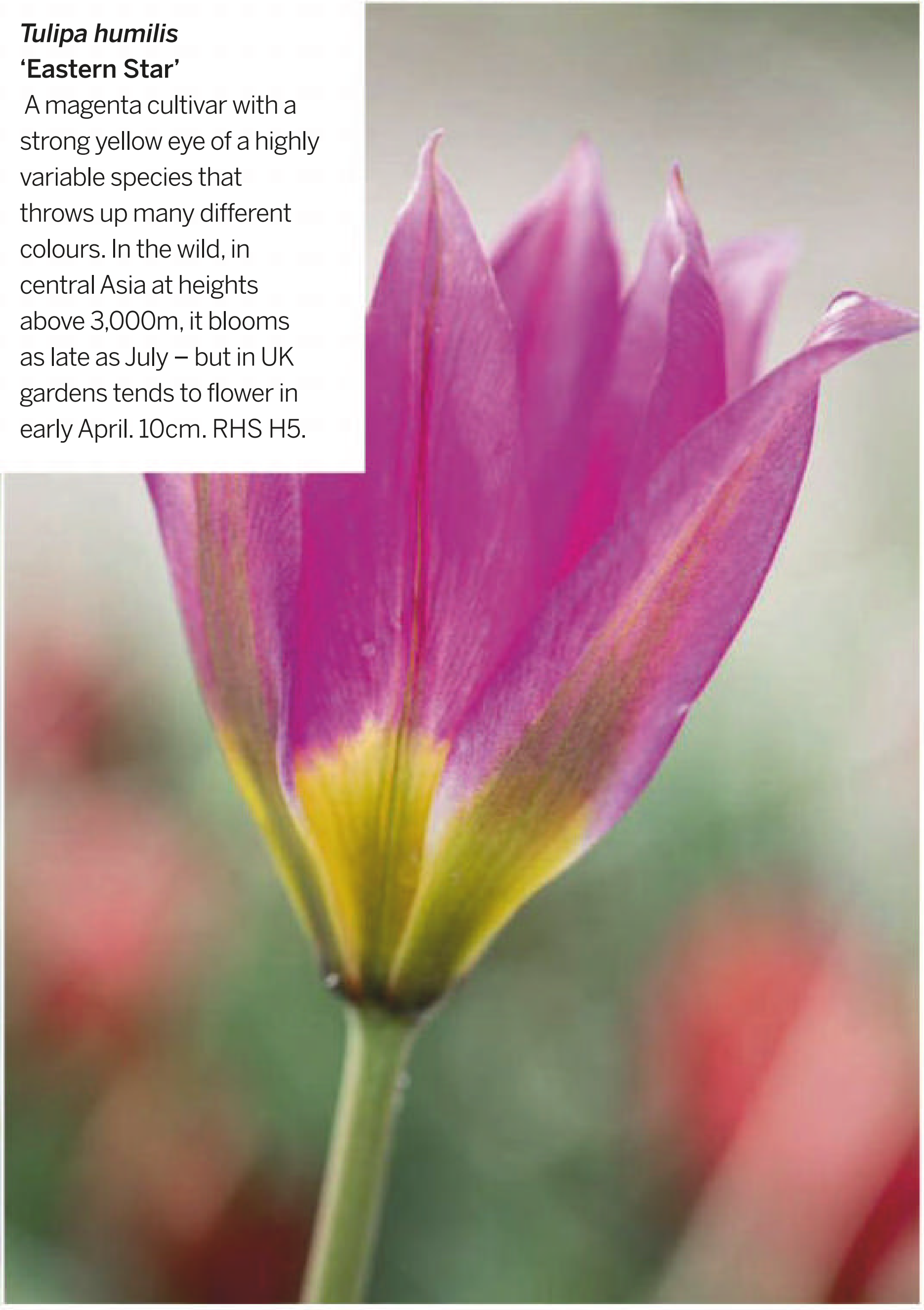
Tulipa saxatilis
Provided it gets enough heat, light and drainage this is one of the most rewarding species. Produces colonies of soft pink blooms, blotched with egg-yolk yellow in April. Leaves appear in November but remain undamaged by frosts. 20cm.



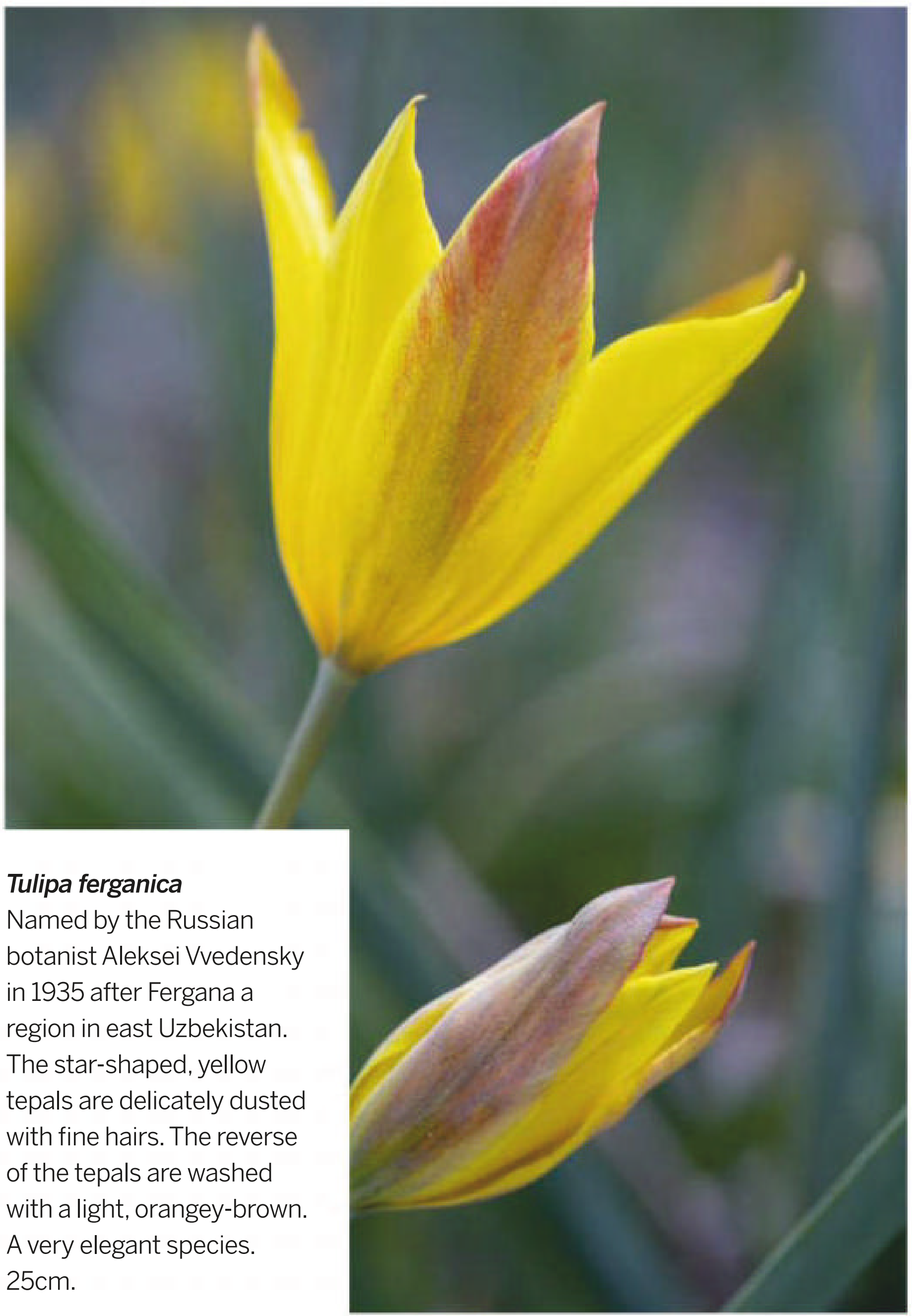
***Tulipa linifolia* 'Red Hunter'**
A strong, scarlet cultivar that opens wide in the sun to reveal a dark blotch. If planted in a free-draining spot it will increase freely. One of the best smaller tulip species for the garden, there is a similar yellow form known as *T. linifolia* Batalinii Group 15-20cm. AGM. RHS H5.



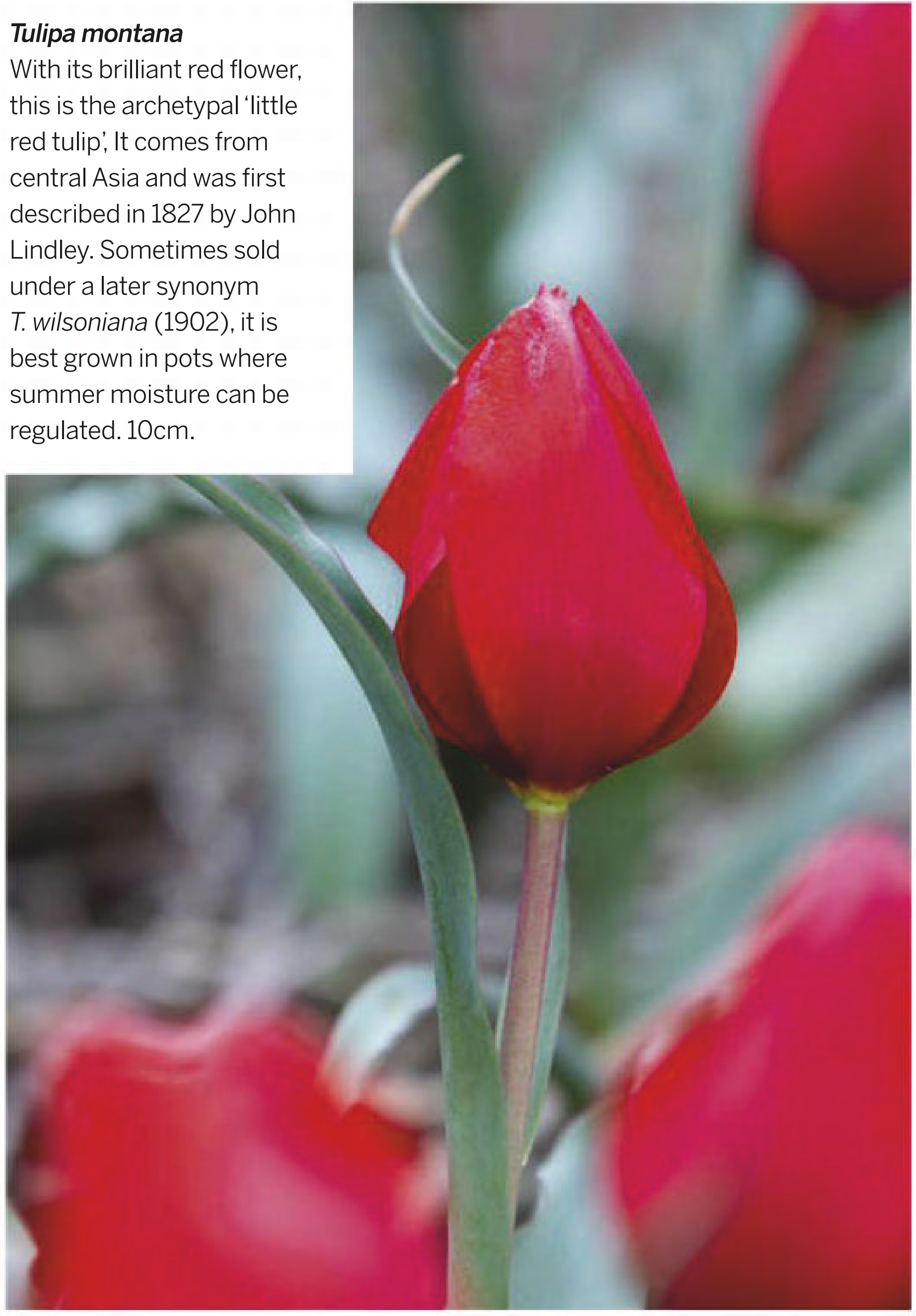
***Tulipa humilis* 'Lilliput'**
Unusually for a tulip, the species resents an extreme baking heat in summer so does well in more temperate European climates. This cultivar has a pronounced blue/black blotch and usually produces more multiple flowers per bulb. Blooms March. 10-15cm. RHS H5.



***Tulipa humilis* 'Eastern Star'**
A magenta cultivar with a strong yellow eye of a highly variable species that throws up many different colours. In the wild, in central Asia at heights above 3,000m, it blooms as late as July – but in UK gardens tends to flower in early April. 10cm. RHS H5.



Tulipa ferganica
Named by the Russian botanist Aleksei Vvedensky in 1935 after Fergana a region in east Uzbekistan. The star-shaped, yellow tepals are delicately dusted with fine hairs. The reverse of the tepals are washed with a light, orangey-brown. A very elegant species. 25cm.



Tulipa montana
With its brilliant red flower, this is the archetypal 'little red tulip'. It comes from central Asia and was first described in 1827 by John Lindley. Sometimes sold under a later synonym *T. wilsoniana* (1902), it is best grown in pots where summer moisture can be regulated. 10cm.

Cultivation

The most important consideration for species tulips is drainage, especially during dormant periods. To provide better control, especially for the more sensitive species, breathable terracotta pots are a good option. Pots should be lined with crocks and filled with a loam-based compost mixed with a few handfuls of coarse grit. When planting the bulbs in autumn place them about half way down the pot ensuring a good root run. These pots can then be placed in a cold glasshouse or plunged into an outdoor sand bed with a protective covering to prevent rain damage. The sand helps the pots from drying out completely and allows indirect watering. In his excellent book, *Tulips: Species and Hybrids for the Gardener*, Richard Wilford states 'plunging your pots is the greatest improvement you can make to the way you grow tulips'.

It's difficult to over-water a well-drained pot while a tulip is in full growth but take care as plants first emerge, and as they senesce – too much water will induce rot; too little may stunt their growth. Once leaves have yellowed you can empty the pots, clean the bulbs and store them in a cool, dark place, which frees up the pots for summer annuals and gives you an opportunity to refresh the potting mix for planting bulbs in autumn.

If you are planting species tulip in the ground, make sure you plant at least three times the depth of the bulb, deeper if possible. This is best done in autumn but tulips are more tolerant to late planting than other bulbs and can be as late as December. Drainage can almost always be improved by adding sharp sand and/or grit to the soil, and adding a little extra grit beneath the bulb at planting. Most species tulips enjoy slightly alkaline conditions, which can be achieved by adding chalk or limestone chippings to the soil. On very heavy soils a raised bed is an effective method of ensuring good drainage.

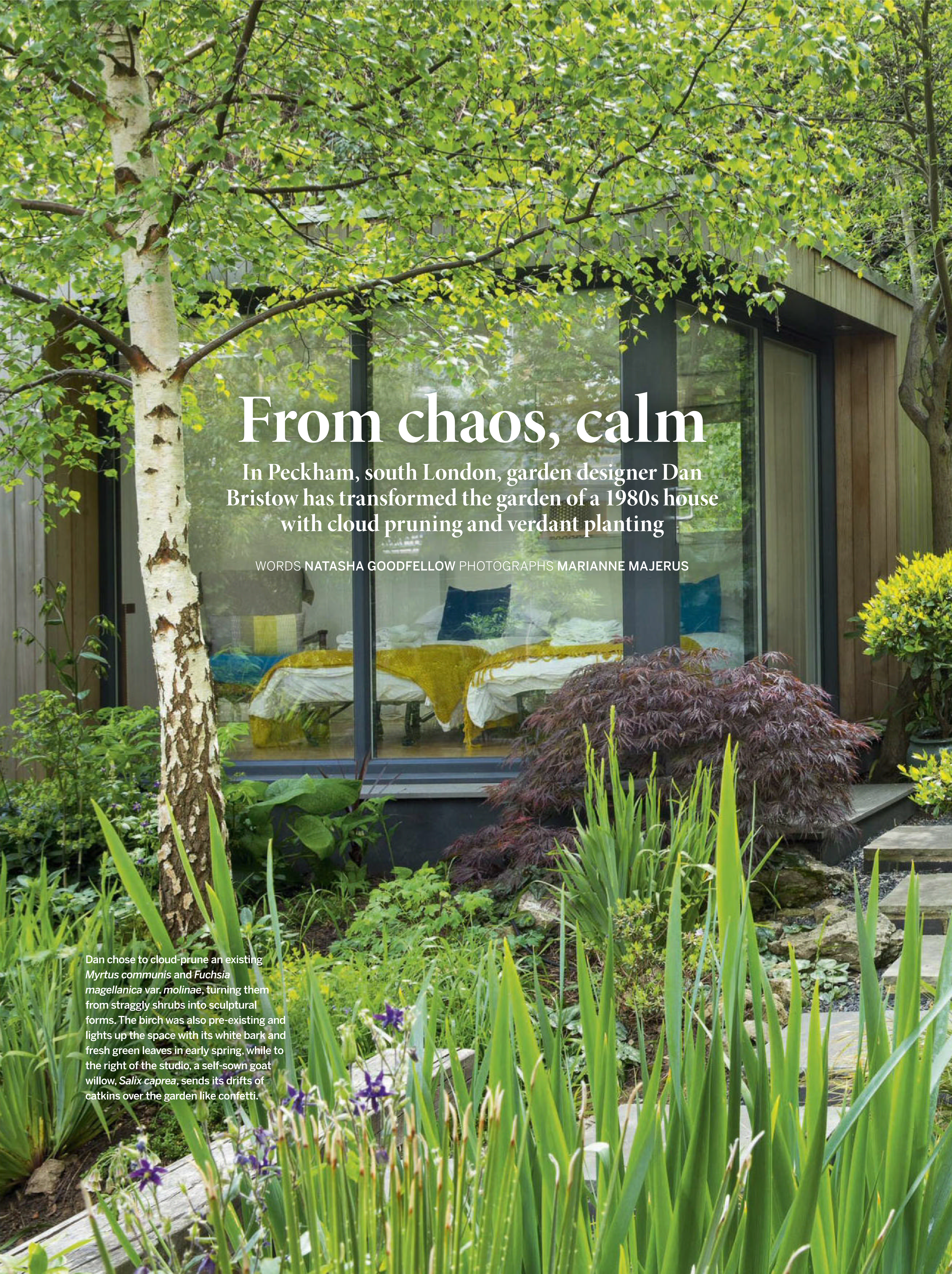
Allow the leaves to yellow before cutting back the foliage. It is possible to lift and store bulbs from the open ground before planting in autumn – an operation facilitated by using crates or aquatic plant pots, which allow the bulbs to root into the soil but can be easily lifted when dormant. The bulbs can be fed with an organic fertiliser during the growing season, to increase their vigour and resistance to pest and disease. Maintaining good airflow around the plants is the best way to prevent the build up of tulip fire fungus and infestations of aphids. Many species perform better after a long, hot summer the previous year.

Where to buy

- **Avon Bulbs**
  Burnt House Farm,
  Mid Lambrook,
  South Petherton,
  Somerset TA13 5HE.
  Tel 01460 242177,
  avonbulbs.co.uk
- **Bloms Bulbs**
  Primrose Nurseries,
  Melchbourne,
  Bedfordshire MK44 1ZZ.
  Tel 01234 709099,
  blomsbulbs.com
- **Jacques Amand International**
  The Nurseries,
  Clamp Hill, Stanmore,
  Middlesex HA7 3JS.
  Tel 020 8420 7110,
  jacquesamandintl.com
- **Peter Nyssen**
  124 Flixton Road,
  Urmston,
  Manchester M41 5BG.
  Tel 0161 747 4000,
  peternyssen.com

More to see

- **Hortus Bulborum**
  Zuidkerkenlaan 23A, 1906 AC
  Limmen, the Netherlands.
  Tel +31 (0)61 188 9489,
  hortus-bulborum.nl/English
- **Spetchley Park Gardens**
  Spetchley,
  Worcestershire WR5 1RS.
  Tel 01905 345106,
  spetchleygardens.co.uk

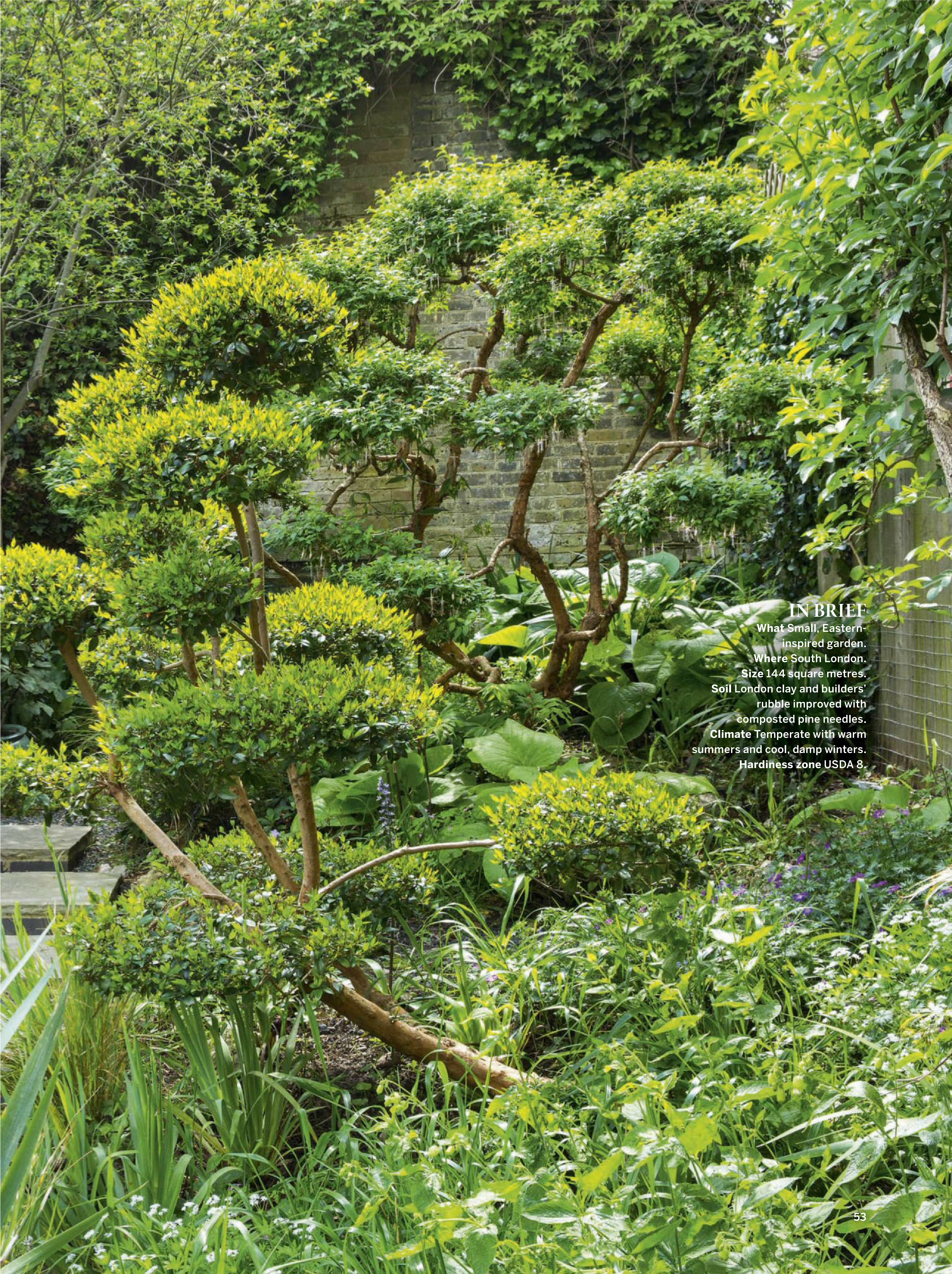


From chaos, calm

In Peckham, south London, garden designer Dan Bristow has transformed the garden of a 1980s house with cloud pruning and verdant planting

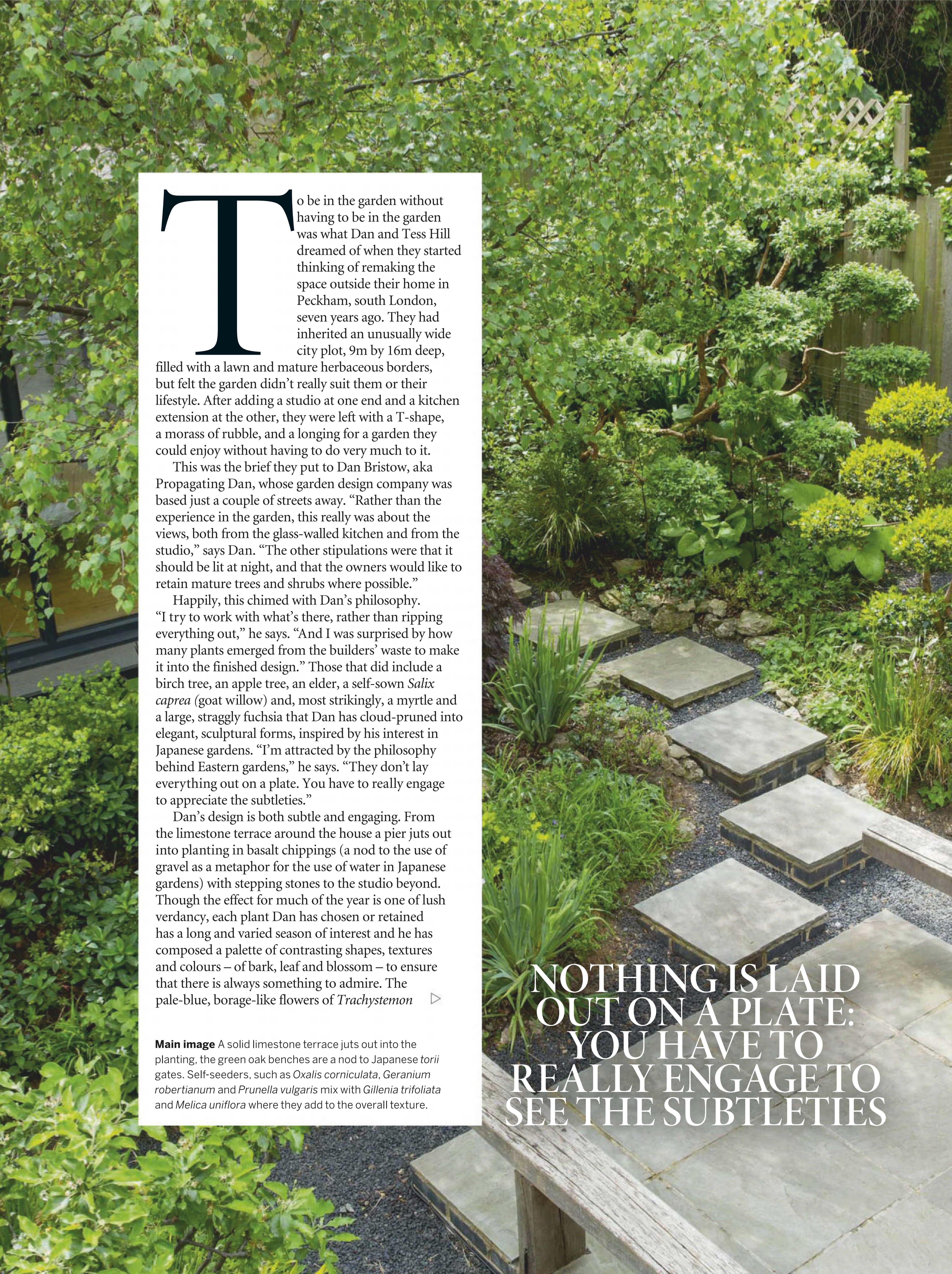
WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

Dan chose to cloud-prune an existing *Myrtus communis* and *Fuchsia magellanica* var. *molinae*, turning them from straggly shrubs into sculptural forms. The birch was also pre-existing and lights up the space with its white bark and fresh green leaves in early spring, while to the right of the studio, a self-sown goat willow, *Salix caprea*, sends its drifts of catkins over the garden like confetti.



IN BRIEF

What Small, Eastern-inspired garden.
Where South London.
Size 144 square metres.
Soil London clay and builders' rubble improved with composted pine needles.
Climate Temperate with warm summers and cool, damp winters.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.



To be in the garden without having to be in the garden was what Dan and Tess Hill dreamed of when they started thinking of remaking the space outside their home in Peckham, south London, seven years ago. They had inherited an unusually wide city plot, 9m by 16m deep, filled with a lawn and mature herbaceous borders, but felt the garden didn't really suit them or their lifestyle. After adding a studio at one end and a kitchen extension at the other, they were left with a T-shape, a morass of rubble, and a longing for a garden they could enjoy without having to do very much to it.

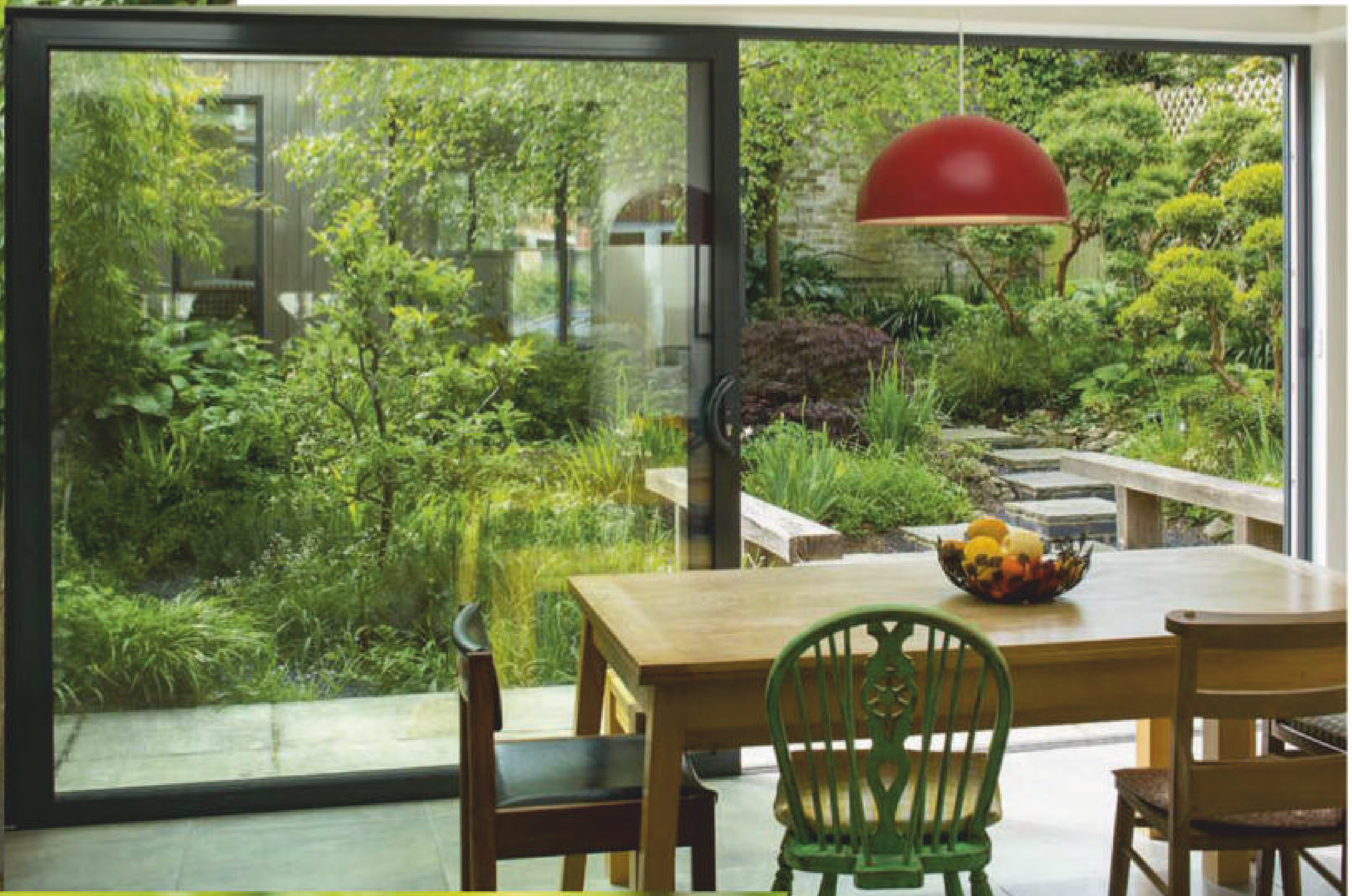
This was the brief they put to Dan Bristow, aka Propagating Dan, whose garden design company was based just a couple of streets away. "Rather than the experience in the garden, this really was about the views, both from the glass-walled kitchen and from the studio," says Dan. "The other stipulations were that it should be lit at night, and that the owners would like to retain mature trees and shrubs where possible."

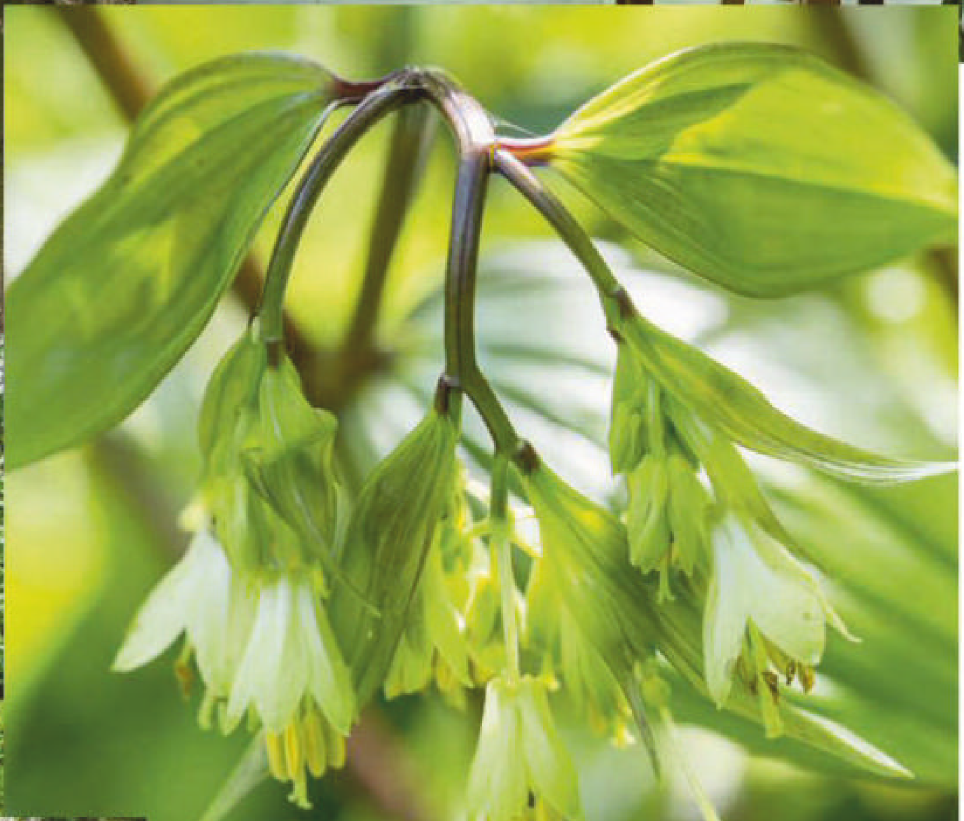
Happily, this chimed with Dan's philosophy. "I try to work with what's there, rather than ripping everything out," he says. "And I was surprised by how many plants emerged from the builders' waste to make it into the finished design." Those that did include a birch tree, an apple tree, an elder, a self-sown *Salix caprea* (goat willow) and, most strikingly, a myrtle and a large, straggly fuchsia that Dan has cloud-pruned into elegant, sculptural forms, inspired by his interest in Japanese gardens. "I'm attracted by the philosophy behind Eastern gardens," he says. "They don't lay everything out on a plate. You have to really engage to appreciate the subtleties."

Dan's design is both subtle and engaging. From the limestone terrace around the house a pier juts out into planting in basalt chippings (a nod to the use of gravel as a metaphor for the use of water in Japanese gardens) with stepping stones to the studio beyond. Though the effect for much of the year is one of lush verdancy, each plant Dan has chosen or retained has a long and varied season of interest and he has composed a palette of contrasting shapes, textures and colours – of bark, leaf and blossom – to ensure that there is always something to admire. The pale-blue, borage-like flowers of *Trachystemon*

Main image A solid limestone terrace juts out into the planting, the green oak benches are a nod to Japanese *torii* gates. Self-seeders, such as *Oxalis corniculata*, *Geranium robertianum* and *Prunella vulgaris* mix with *Gillenia trifoliata* and *Melica uniflora* where they add to the overall texture.

NOTHING IS LAID OUT ON A PLATE: YOU HAVE TO REALLY ENGAGE TO SEE THE SUBTLETIES





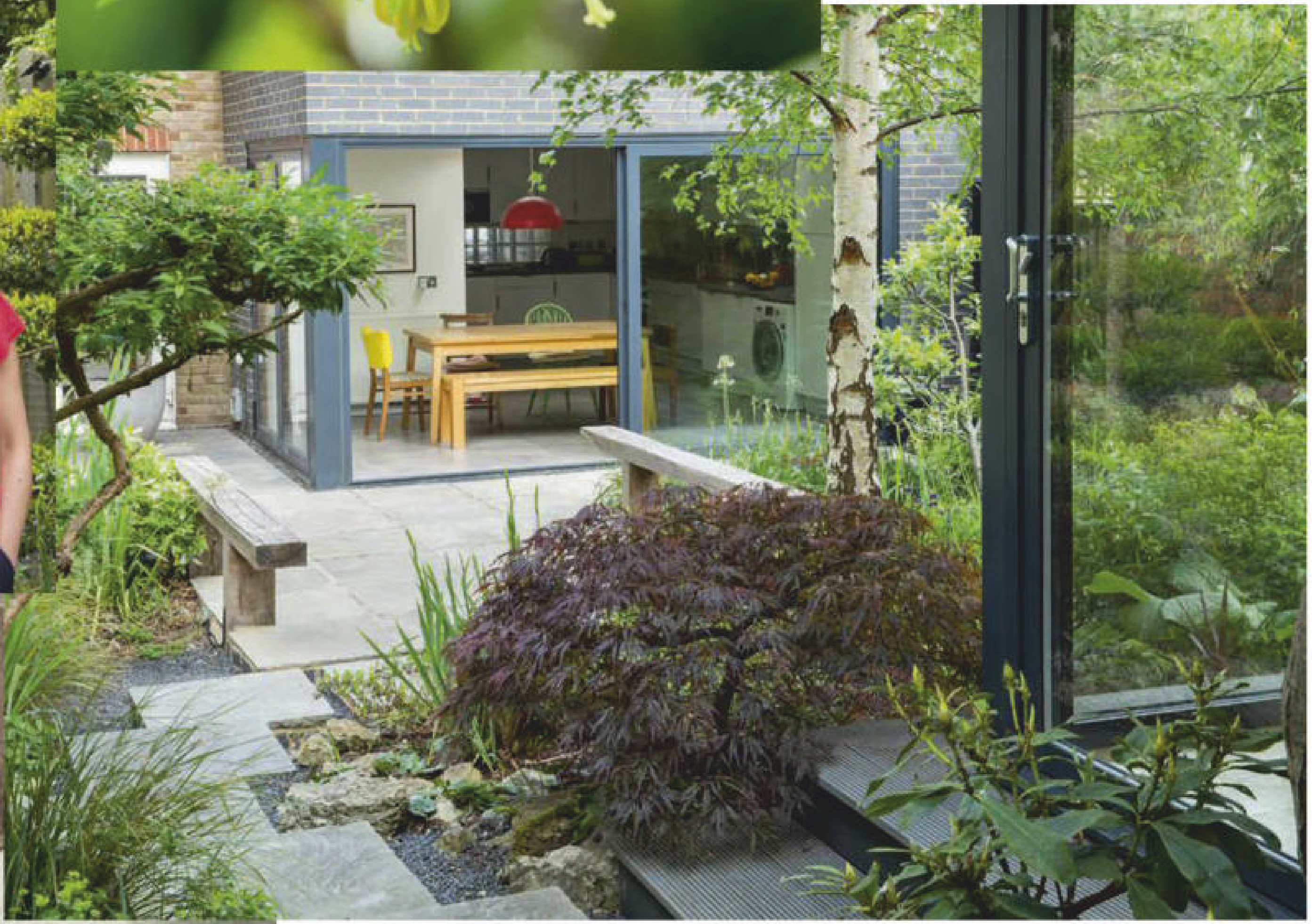
This page, from above

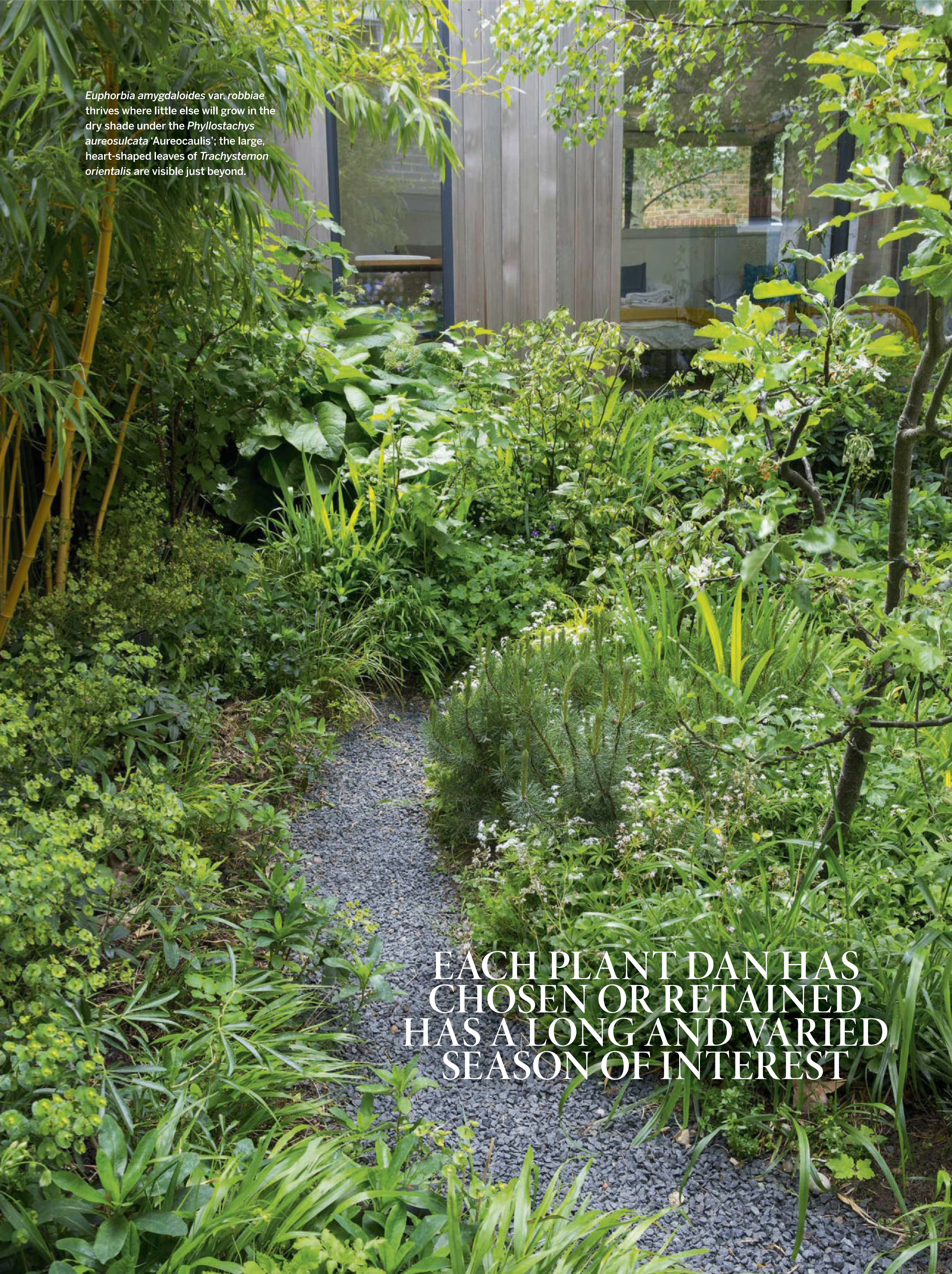
Large glass doors give the feeling of being in the garden even from inside the kitchen. The tree outside the door (to the left) is an apple on an extremely dwarfing rootstock, trained into an asymmetrical but pleasingly balanced form.

Chinese native *Disporum longistylum* adds height (up to 1.8m) and elegance to shady spots.

Garden owners Dan and Tess Hill.

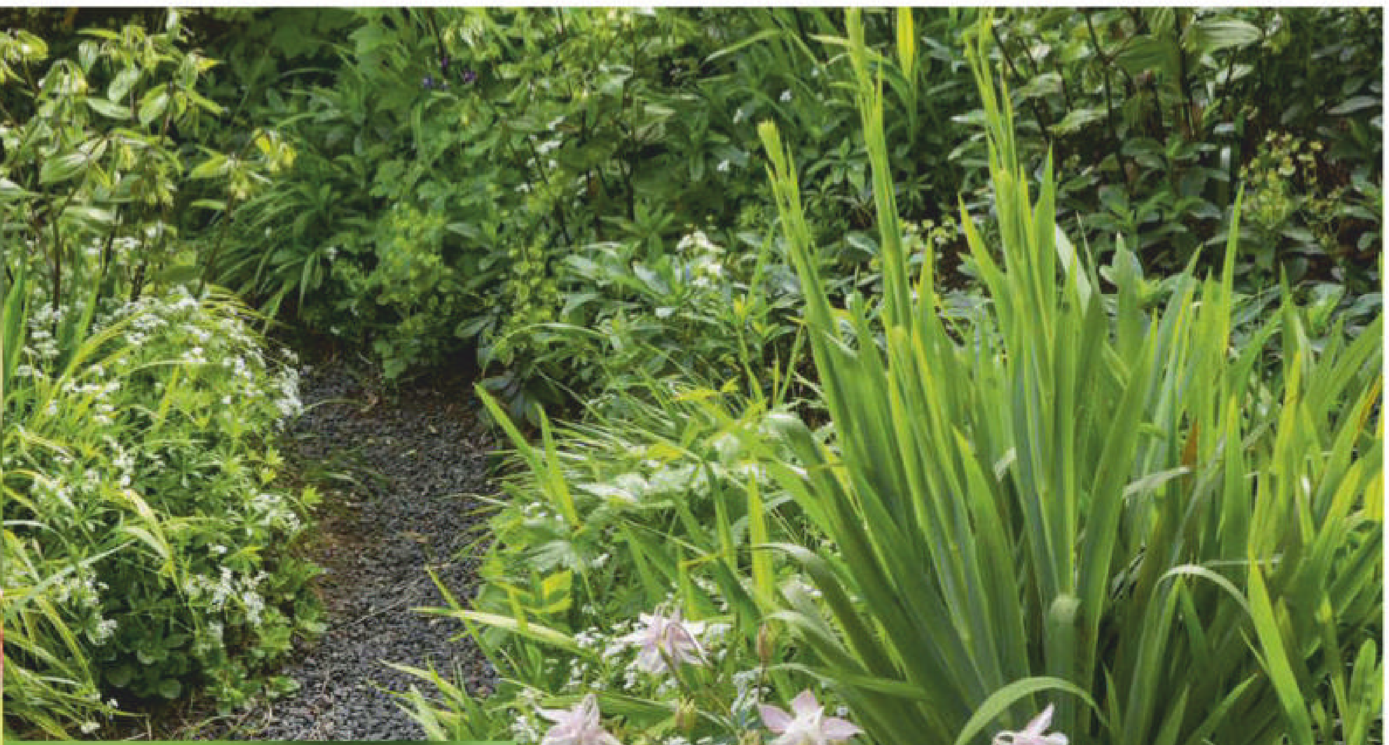
With its finely cut, purple leaves, the graceful, slow-growing *Acer palmatum* 'Tamukeyama' makes a striking focal point from both the house and the studio.





Euphorbia amygdaloides var. *robbiae* thrives where little else will grow in the dry shade under the *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* 'Aureocaulis'; the large, heart-shaped leaves of *Trachystemon orientalis* are visible just beyond.

EACH PLANT DAN HAS CHOSEN OR RETAINED HAS A LONG AND VARIED SEASON OF INTEREST



▷ *orientalis* appear in March before its leaves take over, providing useful groundcover in the shadier parts of the garden and a wonderful foil to the sword-like leaves of *Iris pseudacorus* var. *bastardii* and *I. foetidissima* var. *citrina*, the red seeds of which sparkle in winter. A cloud-pruned *Fuchsia magellanica* var. *molinae* boasts stunning structure, peeling copper bark and pearlescent flowers that repeat through the summer and hang like raindrops under clouds of foliage. A *Sambucus nigra* (elder) is partly fan-trained on the fence to better display its fawn trunk and evergreen *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae* thrives in the dry shade under the *Phyllostachys aureosulcata* f. *aureocaulis*.

Tess and Dan are delighted with the results. "Our house is a 1980s building," says Dan. "This just goes to show how good landscaping can really enrich its surroundings." Tess agrees: "It's a simple concept but as a space to be in, it's fabulous and we enjoy it a lot: from the house and the studio looking out; in the summer sitting in the garden, having barbecues or lying in the hammock; or, at night, sitting out and looking up at the stars." Sounds like they're spending quite a lot of time out there after all. ❏

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Dan's work at **propagatingdan.com**

This page, from top

Self-seeded aquilegias have been allowed to take up residence in the garden, Dan believing that a garden should be able to 'move' from its original design.

The nodding flowerheads of *Nectaroscordum siculum* combine the pink, green and lemon tones of the garden.

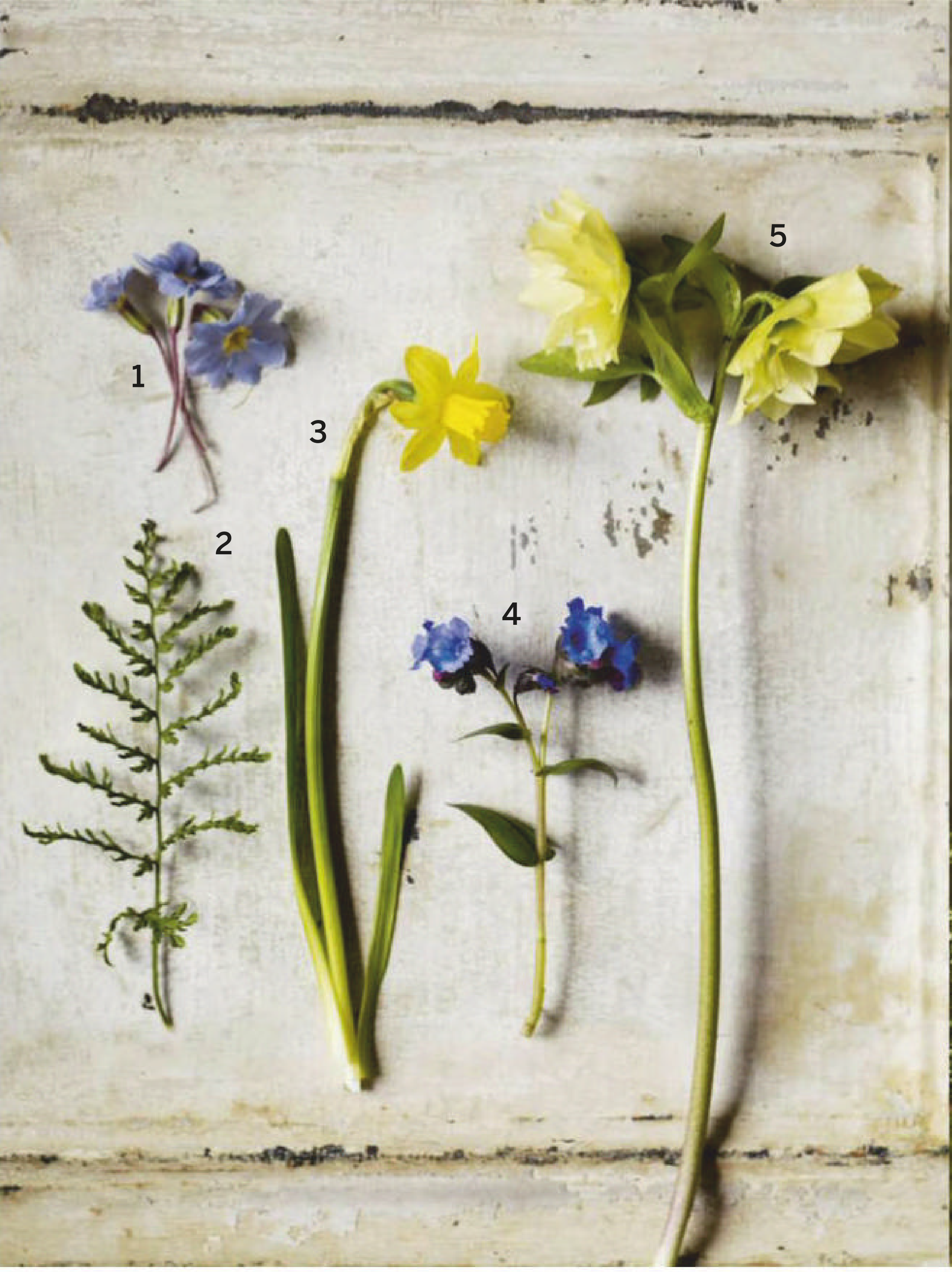
Iris foetidissima* var. *citrina is planted in quantity and has a long season of interest with delicate flowers, powerful foliage and vibrant seedpods later in the season.

A bug hotel provides homes for insects in the garden.

FRESH AND BRIGHT

Head gardener Benjamin William Pope begins a new series on container planting with three easy-to-follow ideas that capture the joys of early spring

WORDS **BENJAMIN WILLIAM POPE** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**



UPLIFTING TRADITIONS

Every winter I reach for my spade and lift one of the hellebores from the garden, bringing it closer to the house for admiration. The uprooted plant is potted up alongside a traditional mix of winter bedding, spring bulbs and evergreen foliage, a cheerful arrangement that will sit politely on any garden table or beside an informal entrance. Here, the colour scheme is blue, green and yellow, which I feel captures the essence of a fresh and bright spring day.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition
Spotted in a local junk shop, this enamel bowl is perfect for the display. Crucially it's wide and deep enough to accommodate the hellebore and additional plants. The slightly battered condition offers an informal and vintage charm, complementing the traditional and relaxed style of planting, while remaining fairly neutral in colour. Central to the display is the hellebore; it is the starting point of the composition. Its elegant, pale yellow is enriched by the deeper tones of the daffodil. Both are enhanced by varying shades of blue, from the soft, pale-blue primula to the rich and vibrant pulmonaria. Verdant foliage comes from the fern, which completes the display offering soft texture and form.

Cultivation and care
Decide on the hellebore first: whether lifted from the garden or purchased it will have the biggest root ball and help determine the size and colour combination of the container. Mix winter-flowering perennials and bedding (in this case both the pulmonaria and primula were autumn divisions from the garden), underplanted with early spring bulbs to extend the season. Use a good peat-free compost mixed with equal parts of John Innes No3, but cover drainage holes with crocks to stop them getting blocked. After planting, water with a dilute liquid feed and allow to settle for a few days in a frost-free area out of direct sunlight. Once flowering has finished you can plant everything in the garden.

Plants

1 *Primula* Barnhaven Blues Group
Long-lived primrose with slate-blue flowers. 15cm. RHS H7.

2 *Dryopteris filix-mas* 'Linearis Polydactyla'
Deciduous, clump-forming fern. Prefers damp soil in shade or part shade. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b†.

3 *Narcissus* 'Tête-à-tête'
A robust dwarf daffodil. 20cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

4 *Pulmonaria* 'Blue Ensign'
Semi-evergreen perennial with blue flowers. 25cm. AGM. RHS H6.

5 *Helleborus* x *hybridus* Farmyard double primrose
Semi-evergreen perennial with pale-yellow flowers. 45cm. RHS H7.

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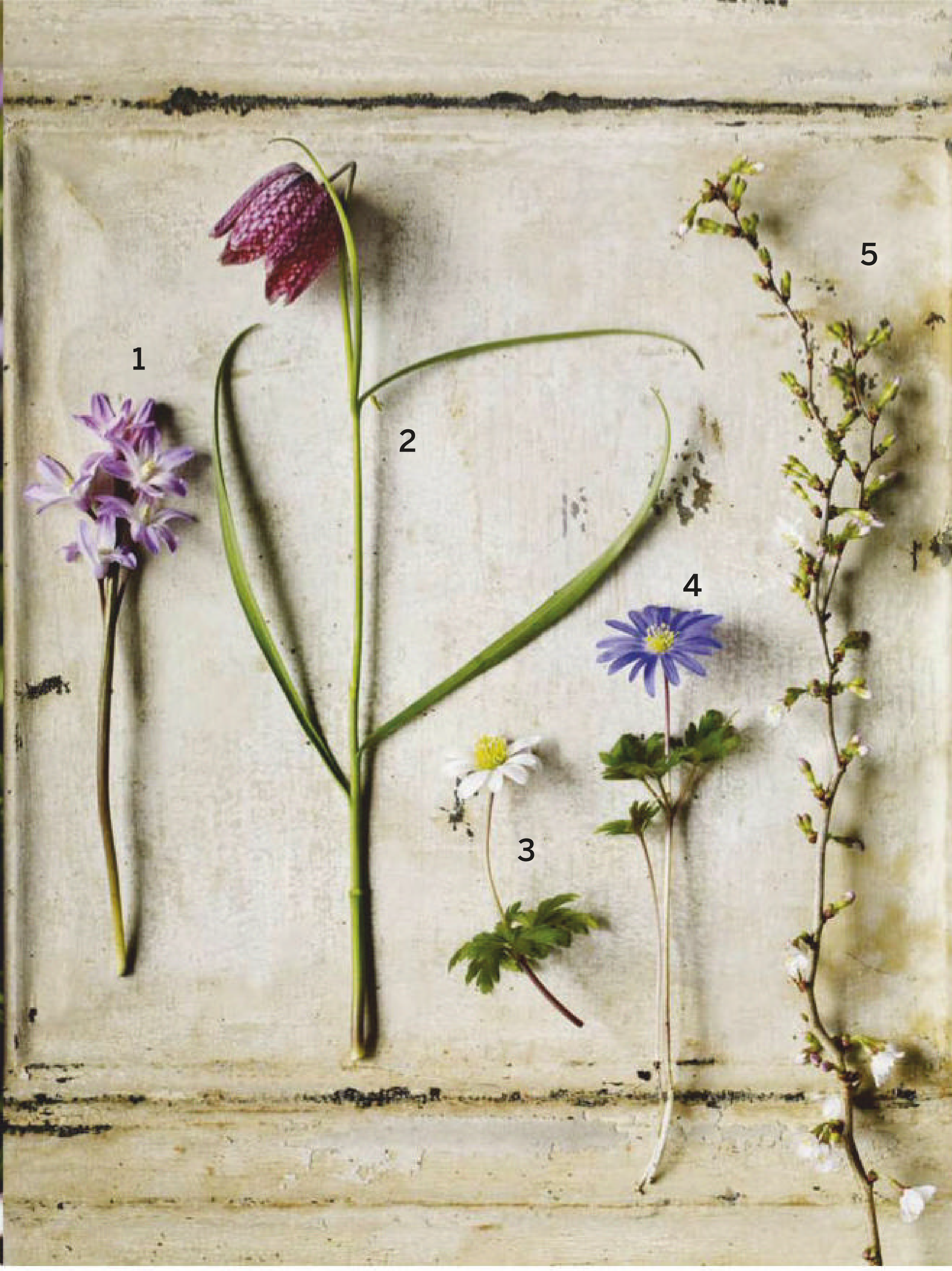
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



A WOODLAND STIRRING

I love a woodland walk in spring. Carpets of wild flowers busily jostle for light, as the first buds begin to break in the canopy above, signalling the onset of a fresh, green tapestry. Seeking to emulate this moment, I planted this container with a mix of perennial bulbs, all of which sleep under a blanket of ivy. Rising from the earthenware pot is *Prunus incisa* 'Kojo-no-mai', a small cherry tree that in time will grow a little larger to replicate a woodland canopy.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

As this is intended as a semi-permanent arrangement it was important to select a large container that allows space for future growth. I've kept the container simple. Using a large terracotta pot with a brown earthenware glaze gives a natural appearance that sits back and allows the plants to be the centre of attention. The mixture of blue and white anemones set the tone, scrambling through the ivy while allowing the taller fritillary and scilla to rise above. Providing further height and balance to the arrangement is the cherry tree. It's a slow-growing cultivar that can be grown as a shrub and produces masses of dainty, pale-pink flowers in spring, as well as fabulous foliage colour in autumn.

Cultivation and care

Cover the drainage holes with a layer of crocks before planting the tree in a soil-based compost, such as John Innes No3. I've used *Hedera helix* 'Tripod', with its elongated, narrow leaves for the evergreen groundcover, but a *Vinca minor* cultivar would also work well. This is underplanted with the various bulbs and corms, creating an ornamental floral carpet that has a naturalistic habit. Feed with a dilute liquid fertiliser in the growing months, cutting back any dead foliage or flowers to maintain a tidy appearance. Larger containers allow you to include other spring flowers, such as *Cyclamen coum*, while *Crocus speciosus*, or *Cyclamen hederifolium* will extend the season.

Plants

1 *Scilla* 'Pink Giant'
Sometimes sold as *Chionodoxa* 'Pink Giant', this early bulbous perennial has masses of pale-pink flowers. 30cm. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

2 *Fritillaria meleagris*
Elegant, bulbous perennial. Prefers moist soil in sun to part shade. 40cm. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

3 *Anemone blanda* 'Alba'
Dainty, rhizomatous perennial with masses of daisy-like flowers. 15cm. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

4 *Anemone blanda*
Blue form of the above.

5 *Prunus incisa* 'Kojo-no-mai'
Slow-growing, deciduous, small tree. 2.2m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.

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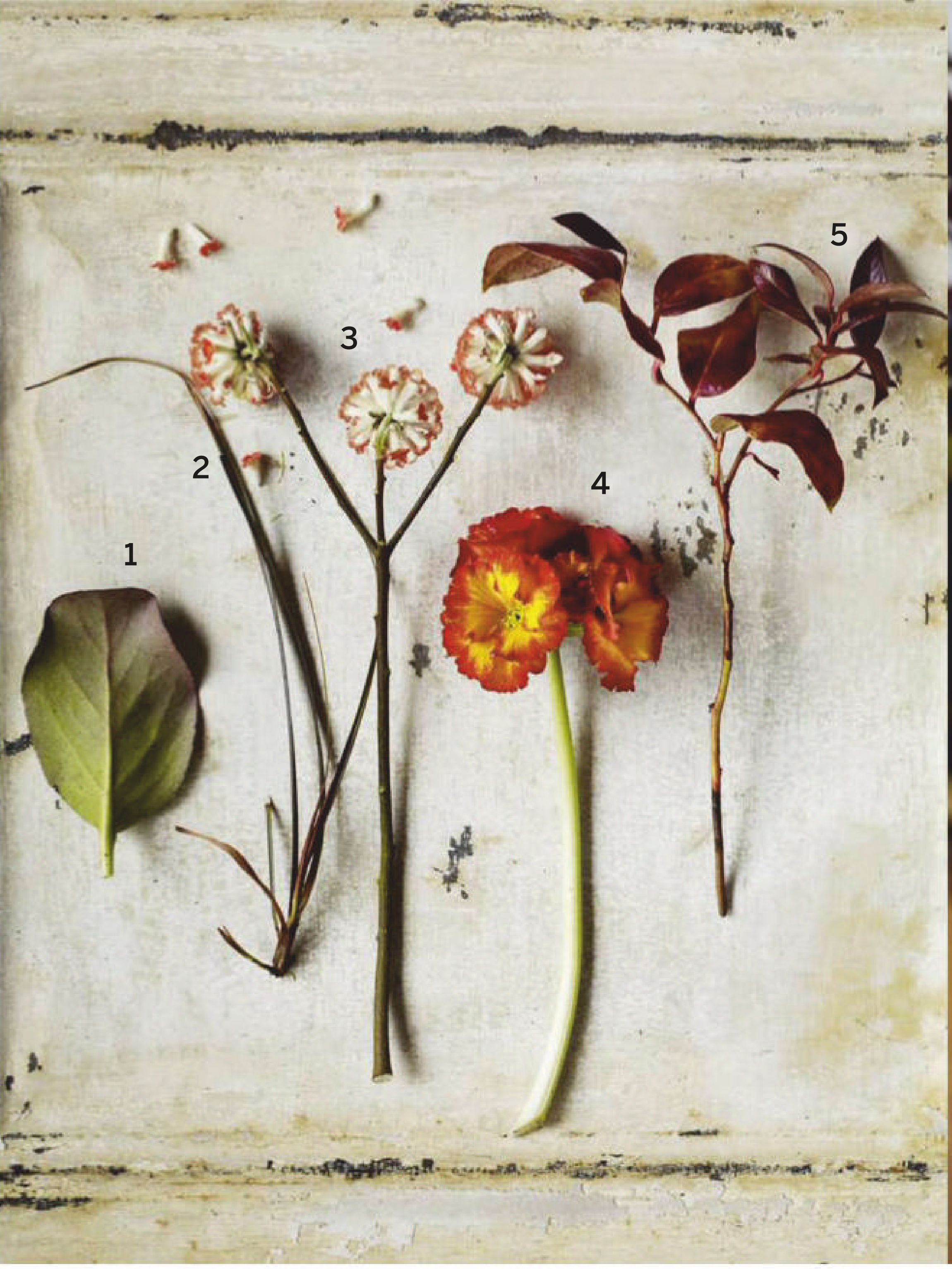


BRIGHT SPARK

Sometimes inspiration comes in a flash. As soon as I saw these unashamedly bright polyanthus (*Primula* 'Fire Dragon'), I instantly knew I had to use them. The old metal toolbox has a gorgeous rusted patina that complements the hot tones of the polyanthus, while the *Edgeworthia chrysantha* gives additional warmth to the display. The mixed burgundy and bronze foliage of the sedge and bergenia help to subdue the heat and prevent it from becoming too outrageous.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

Bold colours work best when accompanied by strong design. The container is simple and confident in its shape. The centrally planted *Edgeworthia* creates a striking focal point, enhanced by the geometrically spreading stems that help to balance the width of the toolbox. A cluster of the bright polyanthus sits central to the arrangement, with some asymmetric repetition to break any formality. Bold, textured foliage comes in the form of *Bergenia cordifolia* 'Vinterglöd', *Uncinia rubra* and *Leucothoe* Scarletta (= 'Zeblid), in varying shades of burgundy, bronze and dark green. By restricting and repeating the colour palette throughout, individual plants act as one, giving the display a sense of cohesion.

Cultivation and care

Ensure the container has adequate space and drainage holes. Using a peat-free, multi-purpose compost with added John Innes, begin by planting the *Edgeworthia* avoiding as much root disturbance as possible. Arrange the rest of the plants in your desired composition, and start planting from the back and centre of the container, working towards the outer edges. Once planted, water thoroughly and allow to drain. After flowering plants are best relocated the to the garden.

- For more container ideas, don't miss the *Gardens Illustrated Pots of Style* special edition, out on 26 March, priced £9.99. See page 107 for further details.

Plants

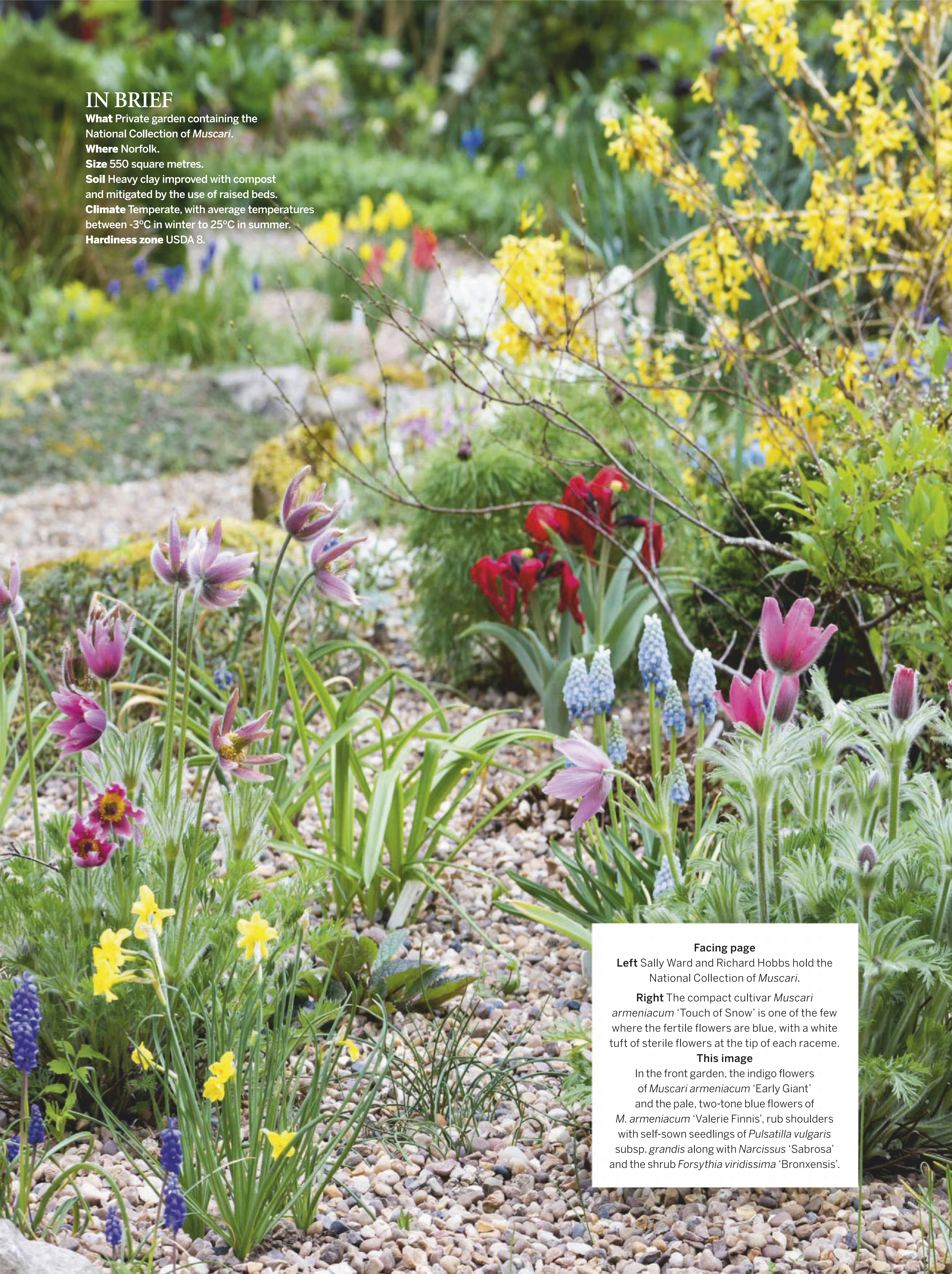
1 *Bergenia cordifolia* 'Vinterglöd'
Evergreen low-growing perennial. 35cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

2 *Uncinia rubra*
Clump-forming evergreen sedge. 30cm. RHS H3.

3 *Edgeworthia chrysantha* 'Red Dragon'
Deciduous bushy shrub with soft green ovate leaves. 1.5m. RHS H4.

4 *Primula* 'Fire Dragon'
Short-lived perennial with bright-yellow and vivid red flowers. 20cm. RHS H4.

5 *Leucothoe* Scarletta (= 'Zeblid)
Evergreen bushy shrub with shiny green leaves flushed with red. 1.3m. RHS H6, USDA 5a-8b.



IN BRIEF

What Private garden containing the National Collection of *Muscari*.
Where Norfolk.
Size 550 square metres.
Soil Heavy clay improved with compost and mitigated by the use of raised beds.
Climate Temperate, with average temperatures between -3°C in winter to 25°C in summer.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

Facing page
Left Sally Ward and Richard Hobbs hold the National Collection of *Muscari*.

Right The compact cultivar *Muscari armeniacum* 'Touch of Snow' is one of the few where the fertile flowers are blue, with a white tuft of sterile flowers at the tip of each raceme.

This image
In the front garden, the indigo flowers of *Muscari armeniacum* 'Early Giant' and the pale, two-tone blue flowers of *M. armeniacum* 'Valerie Finnis', rub shoulders with self-sown seedlings of *Pulsatilla vulgaris* subsp. *grandis* along with *Narcissus* 'Sabrosa' and the shrub *Forsythia viridissima* 'Bronxensis'.

Singing the blues

The tiny Norfolk garden of Sally Ward and Richard Hobbs holds the National Collection of Muscari *– which came their way purely by chance*

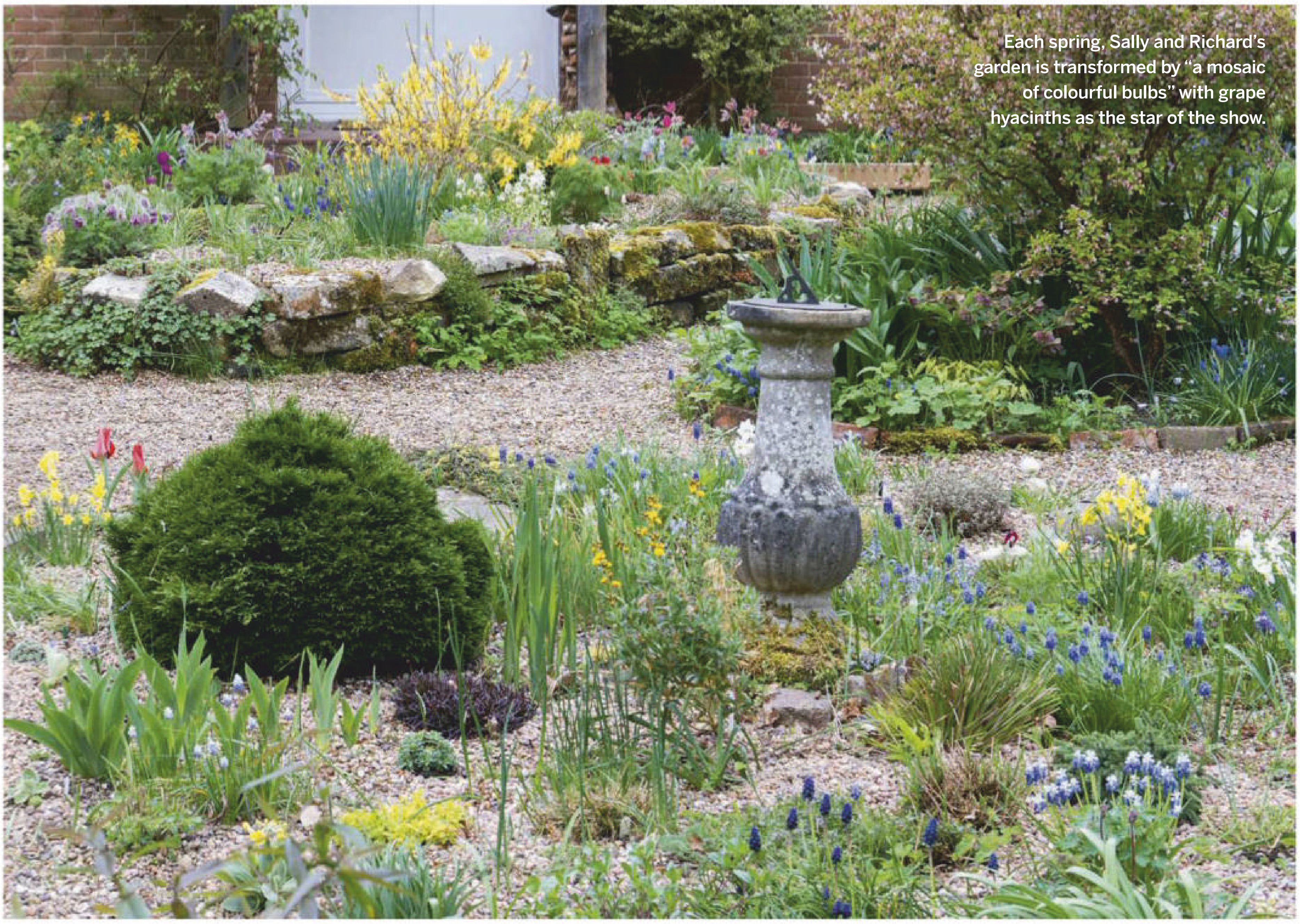
WORDS **JANE PERRONE** PHOTOGRAPHS **NICOLA STOCKEN / GAP PHOTOS**

Grape hyacinths are often classed as the least welcome relatives in the spring-bulb world; not something you'd wish to let loose in your garden. But catch sight of this muscari-packed Norfolk garden in spring and you'll soon realise how easy, rewarding and eye catching they can be. Owners Richard Hobbs and Sally Ward have held the National Collection of *Muscari* for 20 years, since it was passed to them by their friend Jenny Robinson, a renowned plantswoman whose Suffolk garden Richard visited regularly. "One year I went down and there were all these plants in crates and boxes," he explains. "And she said 'you shall have them'. We didn't discuss it. We now have 182 in the National Collection." As their collection has grown, so has Richard and Sally's mission to set people right about *Muscari*. "They are obliging things, not tricky in the slightest," says Richard. Of more than 70 species, just two are prolific seeders; unfortunately those tend to be the ones people grow.

The collection grows in the couple's modest – some would say tiny – front and back gardens with an overspill growing in a frame on their nearby allotment. Grape hyacinths mainly hail from Turkey and Greece, so they enjoy a sunny, open position with sharp drainage. Here, they mainly grow in raised beds and containers to compensate for the garden's heavy clay soil.

The muscari reach their peak in March and April in what Sally calls "a colourful mosaic of spring bulbs", although certain species and hybrids start as early as autumn and winter, and others as late as the end of May. They're not all blue, either, as many assume. As well as every possible blue tone from the palest baby blue to the deepest indigo, shades of pink, white and yellow also exist. Give the golden blooms of *Muscari macrocarpum* a sniff, and you'll smell bananas. One of the couple's favourites is *M. armeniacum* 'Siberian Tiger', the blooms of which start life as tight green buds that open to white, while *M. armeniacum* 'Helena' sports eye-catching, three-tone blooms that develop from navy blue at the bottom of the flower spike to powder blue at the top.

And there is no shortage of suitable plant partners: although the back garden is more or less south-facing, it adjoins mature woodland, so Richard and Sally pack their back garden with ▷



Each spring, Sally and Richard's garden is transformed by "a mosaic of colourful bulbs" with grape hyacinths as the star of the show.

AS THE MUSCARI DIE BACK, ALPINE CAMPANULAS, PINKS AND SAXIFRAGES GROW TO FILL IN THE GAPS

▷ ferns, trilliums, erythroniums, box, witch hazels and wintersweet. The front garden is more open, and holds the heart of the muscari display, with pulsatillas and narcissi, with the filigree foliage of *Paeonia tenuifolia* subsp. *biebersteiniana* and the spidery yellow flowers of dwarf shrub *Forsythia viridissima* 'Bronxensis' providing more texture and colour. In containers, they often pair grape hyacinths with white snakeshead fritillaries (*Fritillaria meleagris* var. *unicolor* subvar. *alba*).

As the muscari die back, alpine campanulas, pinks and saxifrages grow to fill in the gaps; clever layering means that the garden always looks full. And another feature of grape hyacinths is the strap-like foliage isn't untidy or inconspicuous as it fades.

When it comes to maintenance, muscari don't pose much of a challenge. Although they may need dividing in theory, Richard and Sally say they've never had to split a single clump growing in the ground. Containers should be repotted annually, but will get by for a year or two without it. You don't even need to be particularly accurate when planting: around 8cm deep in autumn will do, says Richard; the bulb's contractile roots will pull it to its favoured spot in time anyway.

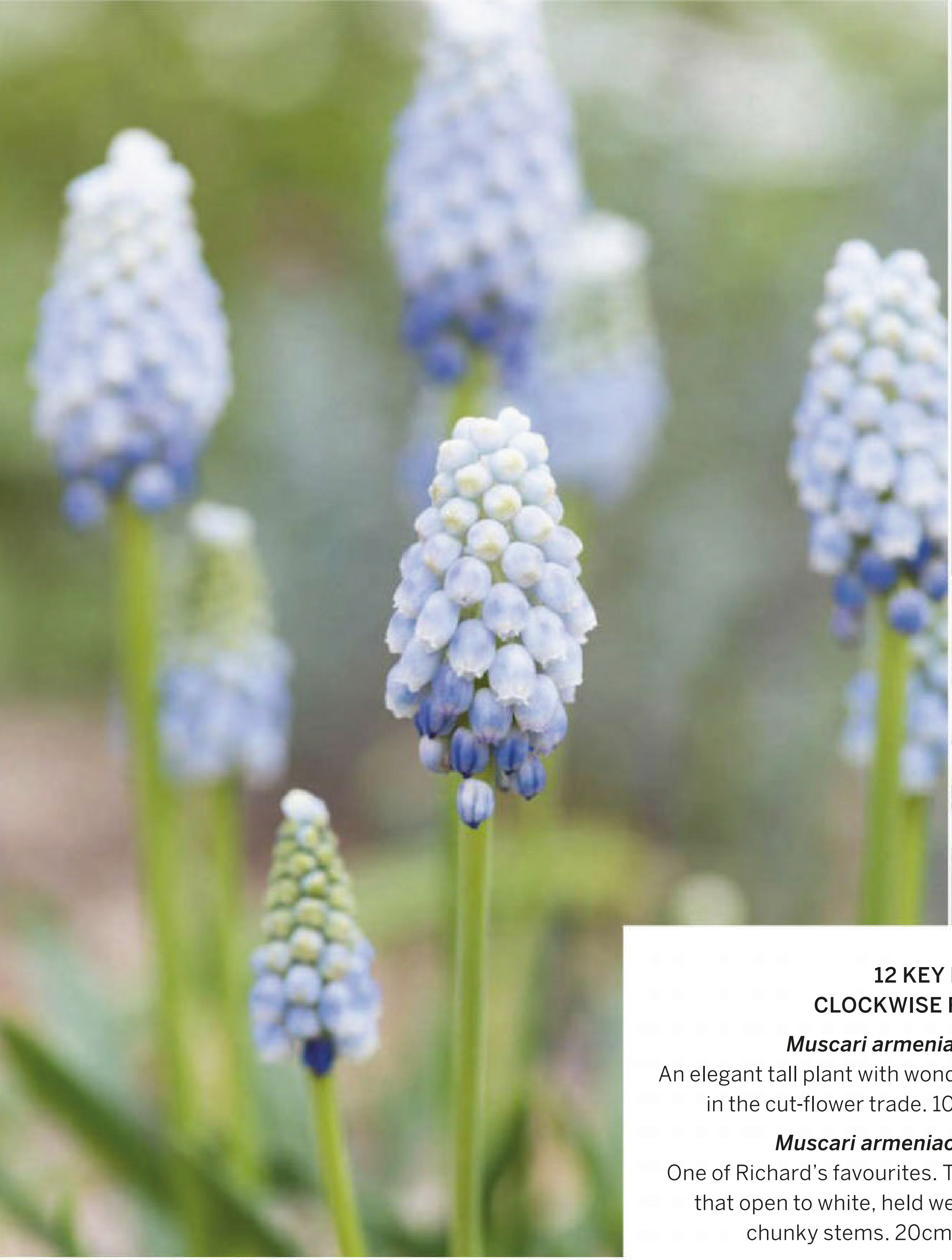
A sprinkle of fertiliser once in a while will help plants reach their potential, but the only must-do is deadheading after flowering, so that the more rampant types don't seed around abundantly. As Richard points out, this isn't a great deal to ask. As he puts it: "A lot of people complain that grape hyacinths seed around, and I always say well do you deadhead your roses? So why not deadhead your grape hyacinths."

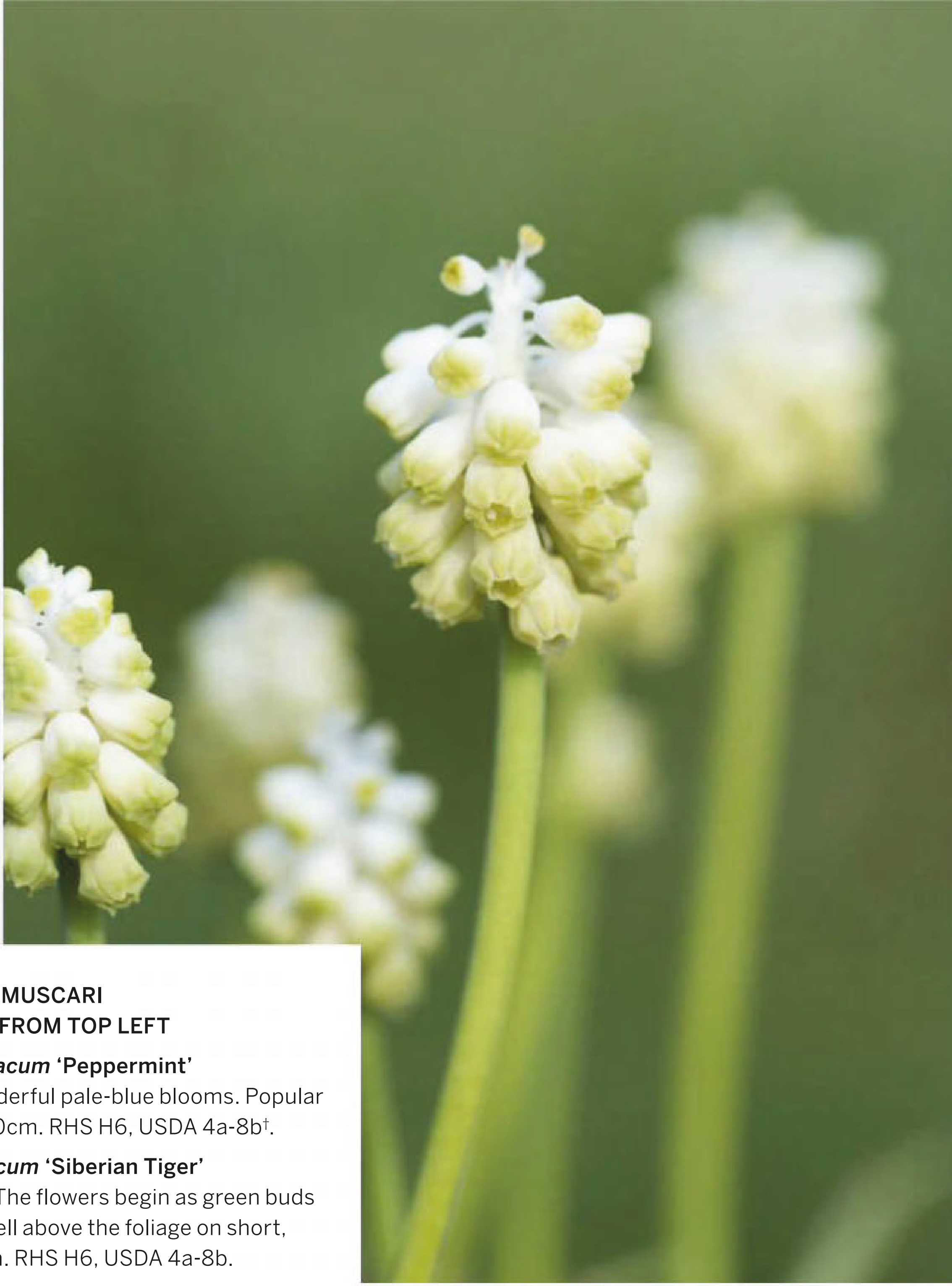
And how do you keep track of dozens of different muscari? The secret is sheep's ear tags. Each plant has a discreet tag with a number on it, which relates to the couple's records, that is attached to wire anchored in the earth among the grassy leaves, so no plant ever goes astray.

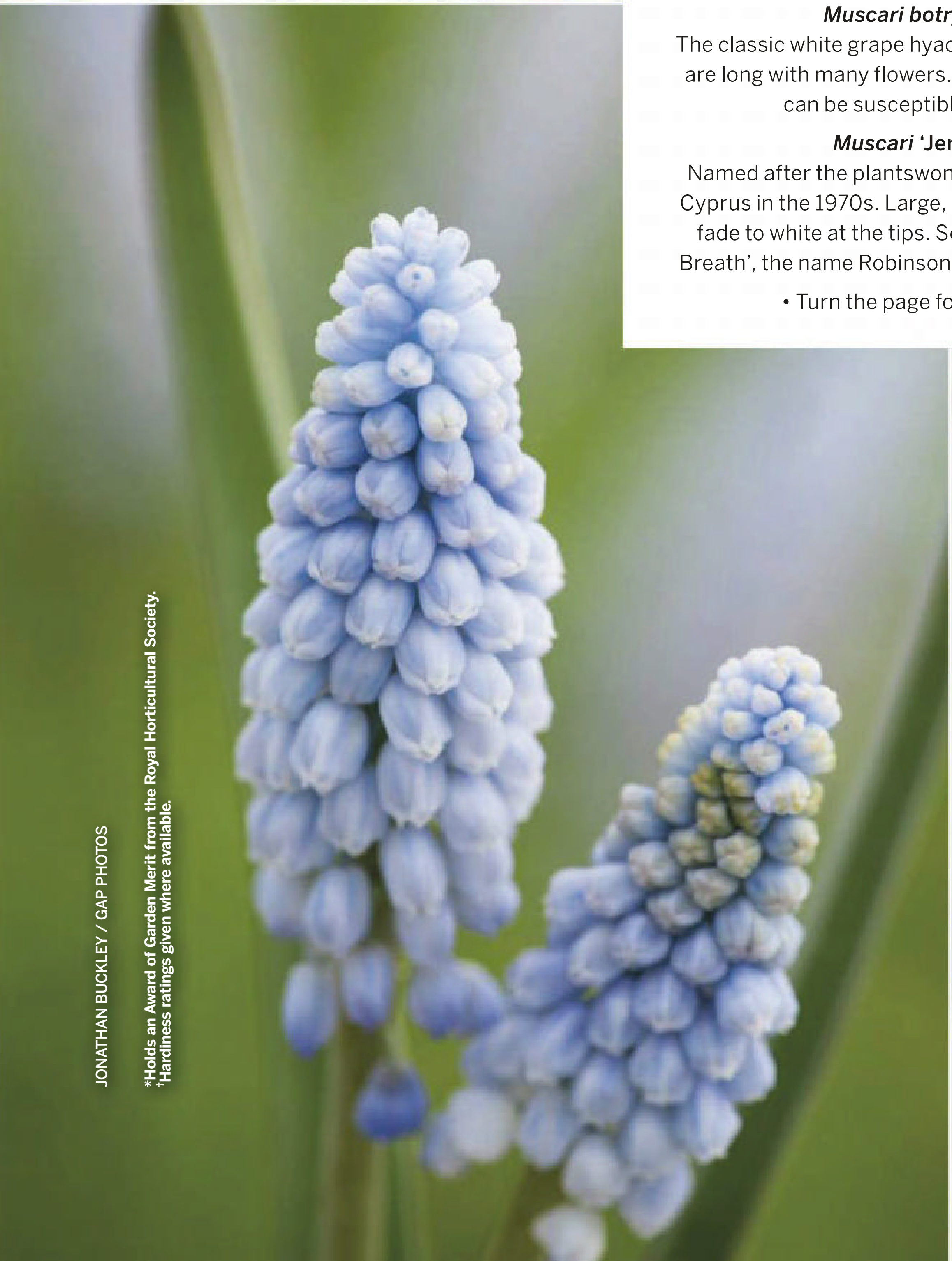
Even though their ever-increasing muscari collection more or less fell into their laps, Richard and Sally are proud of what they've achieved, and convinced that grape hyacinths are beginning to gain a place in the affections of gardeners looking for an easy spring plant. "I don't honestly think you can go wrong with them," says Richard, smiling. He knows he's won over another convert to the muscari cause. ❐

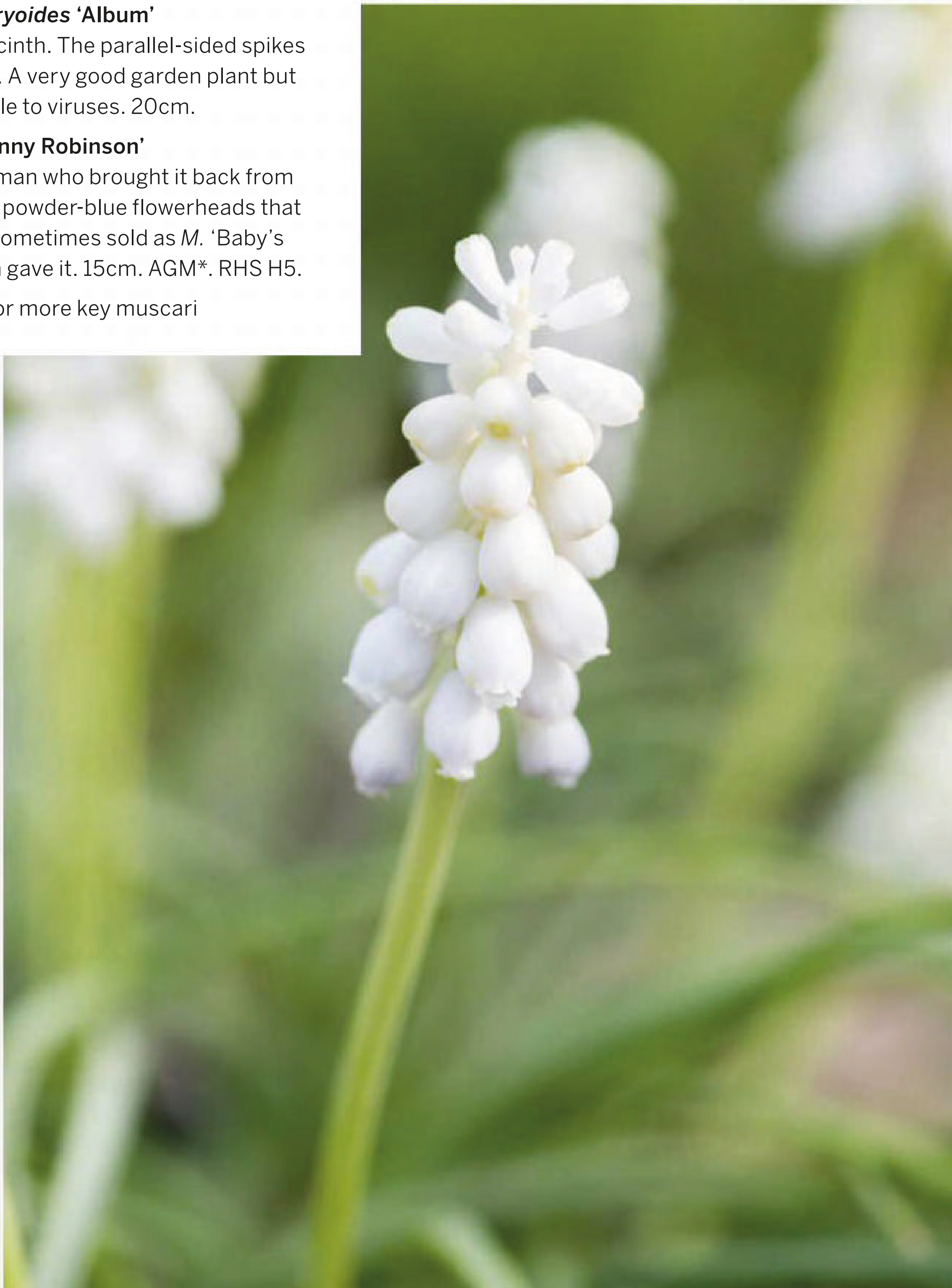
USEFUL INFORMATION

Open Sally and Richard will be opening their garden for charity on 14 April 2019, 11am-3pm, admission £3. **Tel** 01603 714661. The garden is also open by appointment through Plant Heritage. Visit **nccpg.com** for more details.









12 KEY MUSCARI
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

***Muscari armeniacum* 'Peppermint'**

An elegant tall plant with wonderful pale-blue blooms. Popular in the cut-flower trade. 10cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b[†].

***Muscari armeniacum* 'Siberian Tiger'**

One of Richard's favourites. The flowers begin as green buds that open to white, held well above the foliage on short, chunky stems. 20cm. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

***Muscari botryoides* 'Album'**

The classic white grape hyacinth. The parallel-sided spikes are long with many flowers. A very good garden plant but can be susceptible to viruses. 20cm.

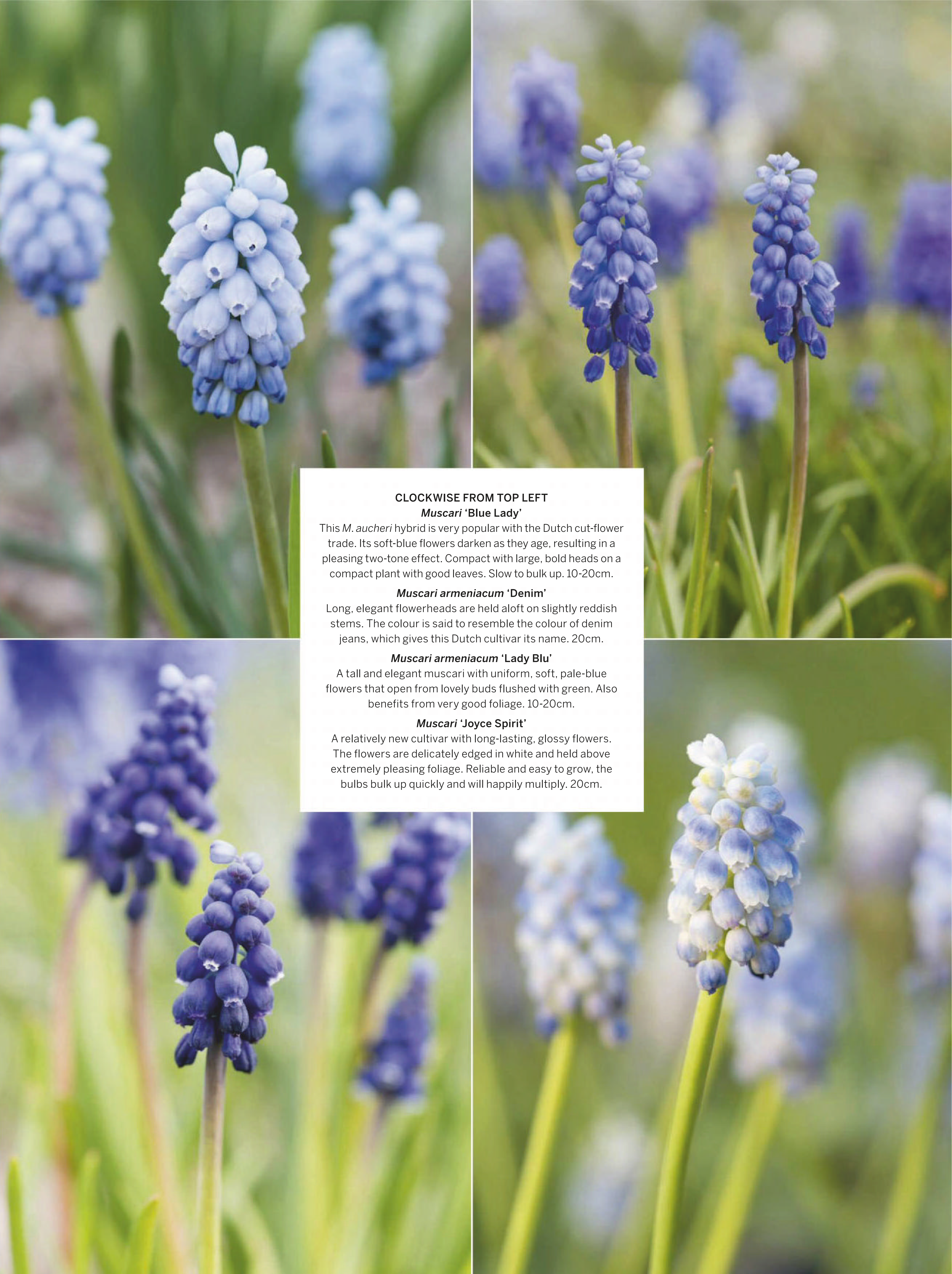
***Muscari* 'Jenny Robinson'**

Named after the plantswoman who brought it back from Cyprus in the 1970s. Large, powder-blue flowerheads that fade to white at the tips. Sometimes sold as *M.* 'Baby's Breath', the name Robinson gave it. 15cm. AGM[*]. RHS H5.

- Turn the page for more key muscari

JONATHAN BUCKLEY / GAP PHOTOS

[*] Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
[†] Hardiness ratings given where available.



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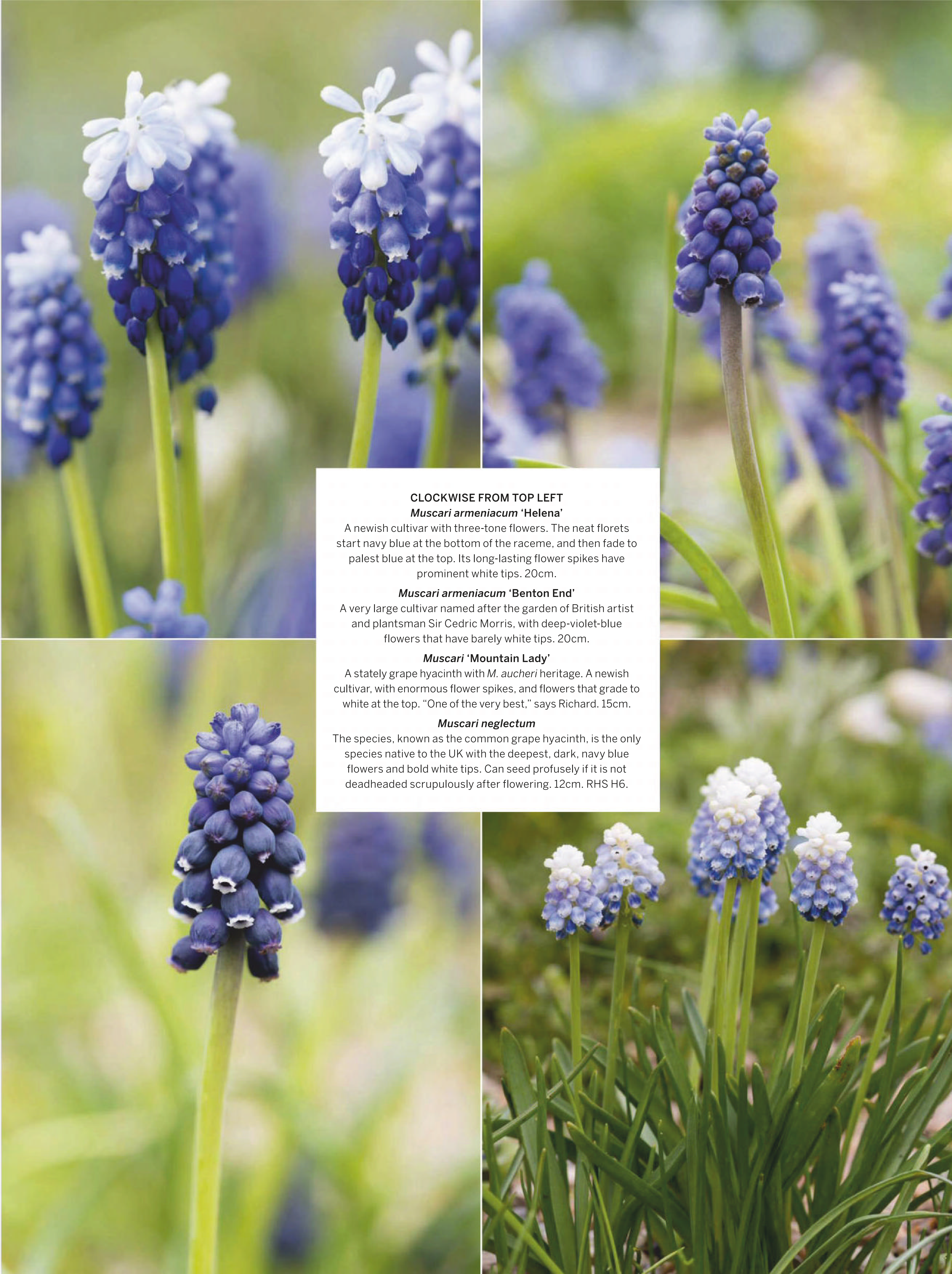
***Muscari* ‘Blue Lady’**
This *M. aucheri* hybrid is very popular with the Dutch cut-flower trade. Its soft-blue flowers darken as they age, resulting in a pleasing two-tone effect. Compact with large, bold heads on a compact plant with good leaves. Slow to bulk up. 10-20cm.

***Muscari armeniacum* ‘Denim’**
Long, elegant flowerheads are held aloft on slightly reddish stems. The colour is said to resemble the colour of denim jeans, which gives this Dutch cultivar its name. 20cm.

***Muscari armeniacum* ‘Lady Blu’**
A tall and elegant muscari with uniform, soft, pale-blue flowers that open from lovely buds flushed with green. Also benefits from very good foliage. 10-20cm.

***Muscari* ‘Joyce Spirit’**
A relatively new cultivar with long-lasting, glossy flowers. The flowers are delicately edged in white and held above extremely pleasing foliage. Reliable and easy to grow, the bulbs bulk up quickly and will happily multiply. 20cm.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

***Muscari armeniacum* 'Helena'**
A newish cultivar with three-tone flowers. The neat florets start navy blue at the bottom of the raceme, and then fade to palest blue at the top. Its long-lasting flower spikes have prominent white tips. 20cm.

***Muscari armeniacum* 'Benton End'**
A very large cultivar named after the garden of British artist and plantsman Sir Cedric Morris, with deep-violet-blue flowers that have barely white tips. 20cm.

***Muscari* 'Mountain Lady'**
A stately grape hyacinth with *M. aucheri* heritage. A newish cultivar, with enormous flower spikes, and flowers that grade to white at the top. "One of the very best," says Richard. 15cm.

Muscari neglectum
The species, known as the common grape hyacinth, is the only species native to the UK with the deepest, dark, navy blue flowers and bold white tips. Can seed profusely if it is not deadheaded scrupulously after flowering. 12cm. RHS H6.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

CHARLES WILLIAMS

The owner of Caerhays Castle and Burncoose Nurseries in Cornwall is a man of impeccable horticultural pedigree, but isn't afraid to stand his ground when needed

WORDS **THOMAS PETHERICK** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

In 2003 an outbreak of a deadly new pathogen was causing headaches for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Known as *Phytophthora ramorum* or sudden oak death, the pathogen had already caused widespread havoc among populations of oak trees in the USA and had now been found among *Rhododendron ponticum* in the UK. Defra decided the best course of action was the instant removal of great swathes of rhododendron to stop the pathogen's spread. But if Defra thought this was a simple solution it had reckoned without Charles Williams.

Among the rhododendrons Defra had in its sights were those forming a shelter belt protecting Charles's family home, Caerhays Castle in Cornwall. Charles stood his ground and pushed for a compromise that would allow him to replace the rhododendrons over time with different shrubs. As a result almost every garden of significance in Cornwall and beyond has Charles to thank for saving their woodland areas. But then many of those gardens probably also have Charles's family to thank for many of their woodland plants.

His great-grandfather, John Charles Williams, better known as JC, planted the shelter belt and much of the woodland garden at Caerhays. JC was the patron of the plant hunter George Forrest, one of the first botanists to explore China's remote and botanically diverse province of Yunnan. By 1912 JC was funding Forrest's expeditions entirely on his own to the tune of £3,100 (more than £400,000 in today's money). Thanks to Forrest thousands of packets of seed flooded into Caerhays. In 1900 there were just 50 species of rhododendron known in western Europe, by the 1920s there were 325 species growing at Caerhays alone.

JC wasn't just growing rhododendrons at Caerhays he was also hybridising, although perhaps the most famous plant he raised was the x *williamsii* camellia hybrids that, as Charles puts it, brought the camellia out of the conservatory and into the garden. That simple cross, between the recently discovered *C. saluenensis* and *C. japonica* has shaped gardens all over the world, as the plant brings strong and hardy hybrid vigour, and a four-month flowering period. Hybridising has continued at Caerhays. Charles's father, Julian added several magnolias to the garden, including *M.* 'Caerhays Surprise' and *M.* 'Caerhays Splendour'. Caerhays now holds National Collections of *Magnolia* and *Podocarpus.* "The legacy of being able to create something new for future generations to enjoy is something my father took great pride in," says Charles.

Growing up at Caerhays Charles spent many hours in the garden, much of it in the company of the estate's head gardener Philip Tregunna, creating small gardens and soaking up knowledge on plants and planting. "My first passion was for growing fuchsias," he remembers. "In 1973 I won my first First Prize at the Geranium and Fuchsia Society Mid and West Cornwall Show." After graduating from Oxford, he worked in the City, rising through the ranks of Lazards merchant bank before the lure of the gardens and Caerhays pulled him back to Cornwall.

In 1984 Charles bought into a small tree and shrub nursery, South Down, persuading its owner David Knuckey to move the business to the empty walled garden of another Williams family home, Burncoose House in Redruth. Renamed Burncoose Nurseries the nursery is now one of the best-known suppliers of magnolias and rhododendrons, and the winner of numerous gold medals, selling plants to customers across the UK and beyond. "Cornwall had very good head gardeners but no way of selling anything," says Charles. "I knew this had to change."

CORNWALL HAD VERY GOOD HEAD GARDENERS BUT NO WAY OF SELLING ANYTHING. I KNEW THIS HAD TO CHANGE

Ever mindful of his immense responsibility and enabled by his nursery, Charles has increased the size of the planted garden at Caerhays to 140 acres. As he says: "This garden was decaying in the 1960s and 1970s, and the average lifespan for rhododendrons, for example, is 60, so we had to start again." The number and breadth of additional species and cultivars at Caerhays has increased by truly eye-watering numbers. There are 650 hybrids and 80 species of the magnolias alone. This is unprecedented on any level anywhere.

A man of phenomenal energy, Charles is up most mornings at 5am and often in bed by 8pm, and still finding time to maintain the Caerhays Garden Diary (now in the form of an online blog), the fourth generation of his family to do so without a break. He is a member of the RHS Rhododendron, Camellia and Magnolia Group, chairman of the Great Gardens of Cornwall, and in 2018 he was awarded the RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in recognition of his achievements at Caerhays and Burncoose – a fitting honour for such stalwart service to history and horticulture. "Continuing a hundred years of work in breeding magnolias and rhododendrons is part of the excitement of gardening here at Caerhays," he says. □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Caerhays Castle, Gorran, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 6LY.
Tel 01872 501310, caerhays.co.uk. Open 18 February to 16 June.
There's a chance to take an expert-guided tour of the gardens at Caerhays, as part of the *Gardens Illustrated* tour of Cornish gardens in April (see page 8 for details).

NEXT MONTH Defra's chief plant health officer, Professor Nicola Spence.

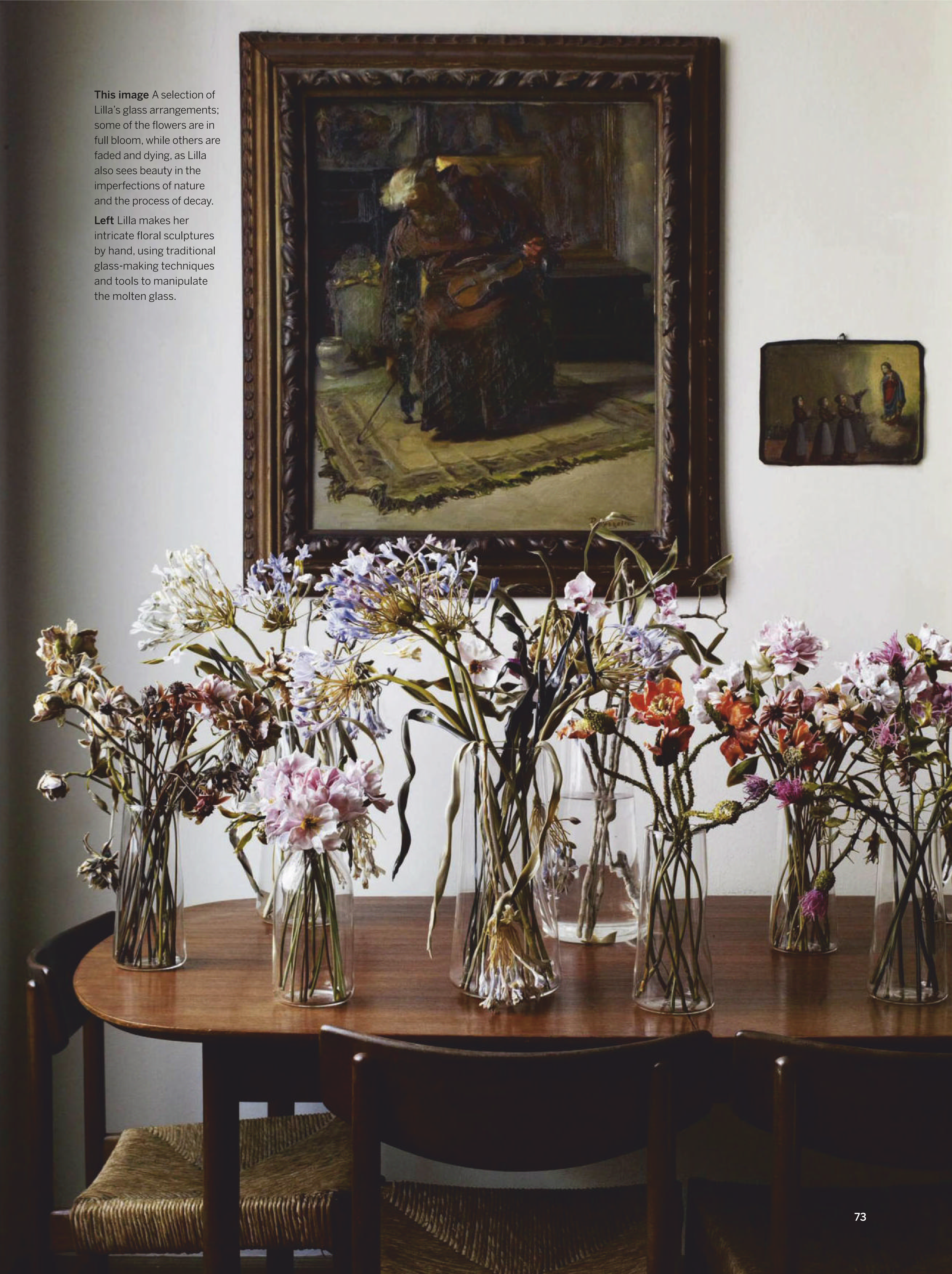
Fragments of beauty

Drawing on her botanical knowledge, Lilla Tabasso creates glass designs of breathtaking skill and intricacy

WORDS **DIANA WOOLF** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**

This image A selection of Lilla's glass arrangements; some of the flowers are in full bloom, while others are faded and dying, as Lilla also sees beauty in the imperfections of nature and the process of decay.

Left Lilla makes her intricate floral sculptures by hand, using traditional glass-making techniques and tools to manipulate the molten glass.



Clockwise from top left

Each petal is made individually and then the separate components are skilfully built up to create single flowerheads, which are in turn joined to stems to create entire flowers.

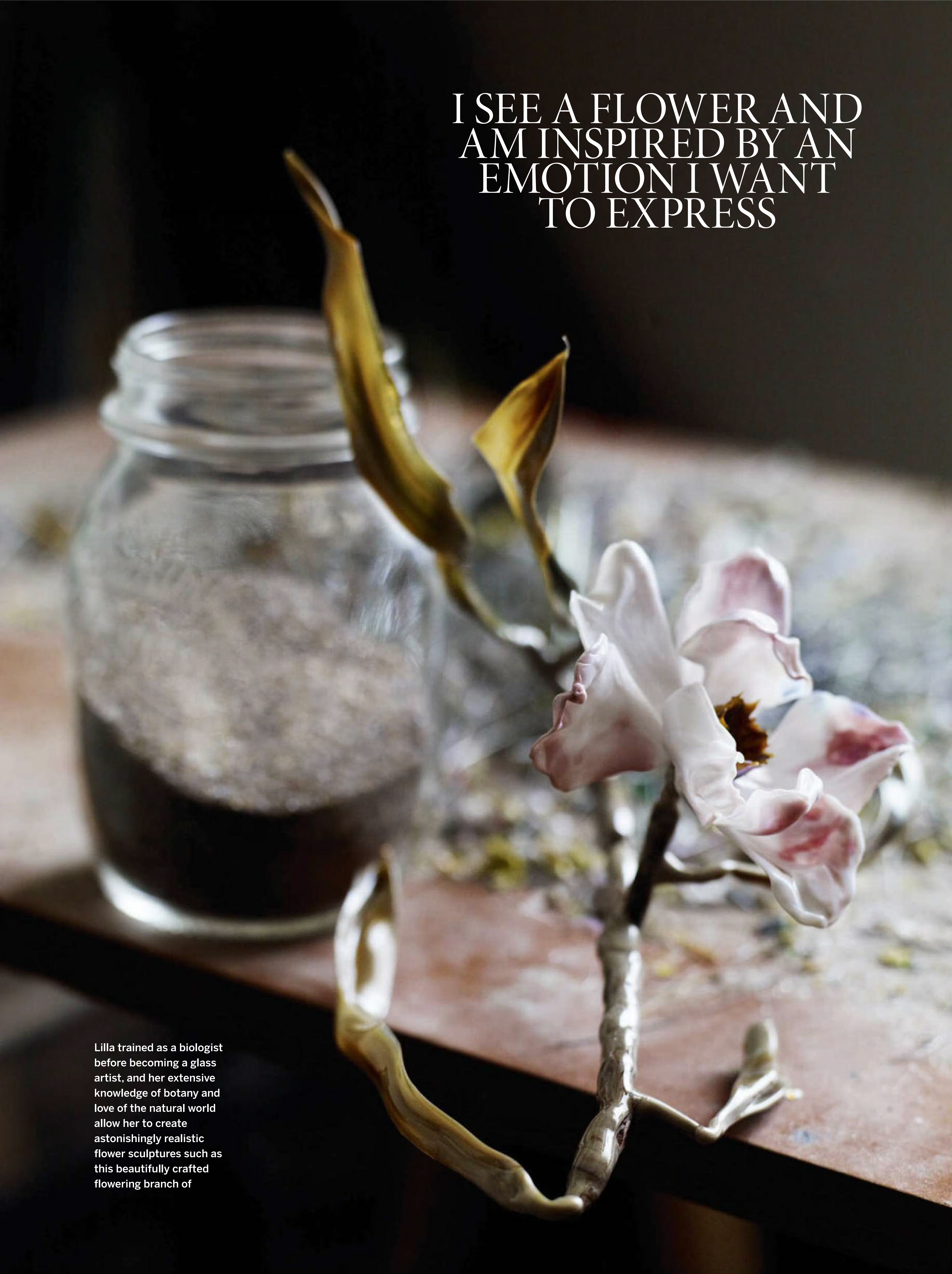
Lilla uses a blow torch to melt the coloured rods of Murano glass, so they are soft enough for her to work.

The tools used to shape the molten glass include tongs, tweezers and pliers in a variety of sizes.

It is important to me to create the flower as it is in reality and true to nature,” says Italian artist Lilla Tabasso, explaining the philosophy behind her strangely compelling and extraordinarily realistic glass sculptures. But interestingly, although she creates her flowers with botanical accuracy – she studied biology at the University of Milan as a young woman – Lilla, who still lives and works in the city, says that the actual species she depicts is not important. “It is not about the flower but about the emotion – I see a flower and then I am inspired by an emotion that I want to express,” she explains. For example, a fascinating sculpture of savagely spiked thistles is inspired by the idea of suffering, while other pieces are infused with a sense of melancholy as she is interested in capturing not only the freshness of a flower in full bloom, but also its drooping petals as it begins to fade.

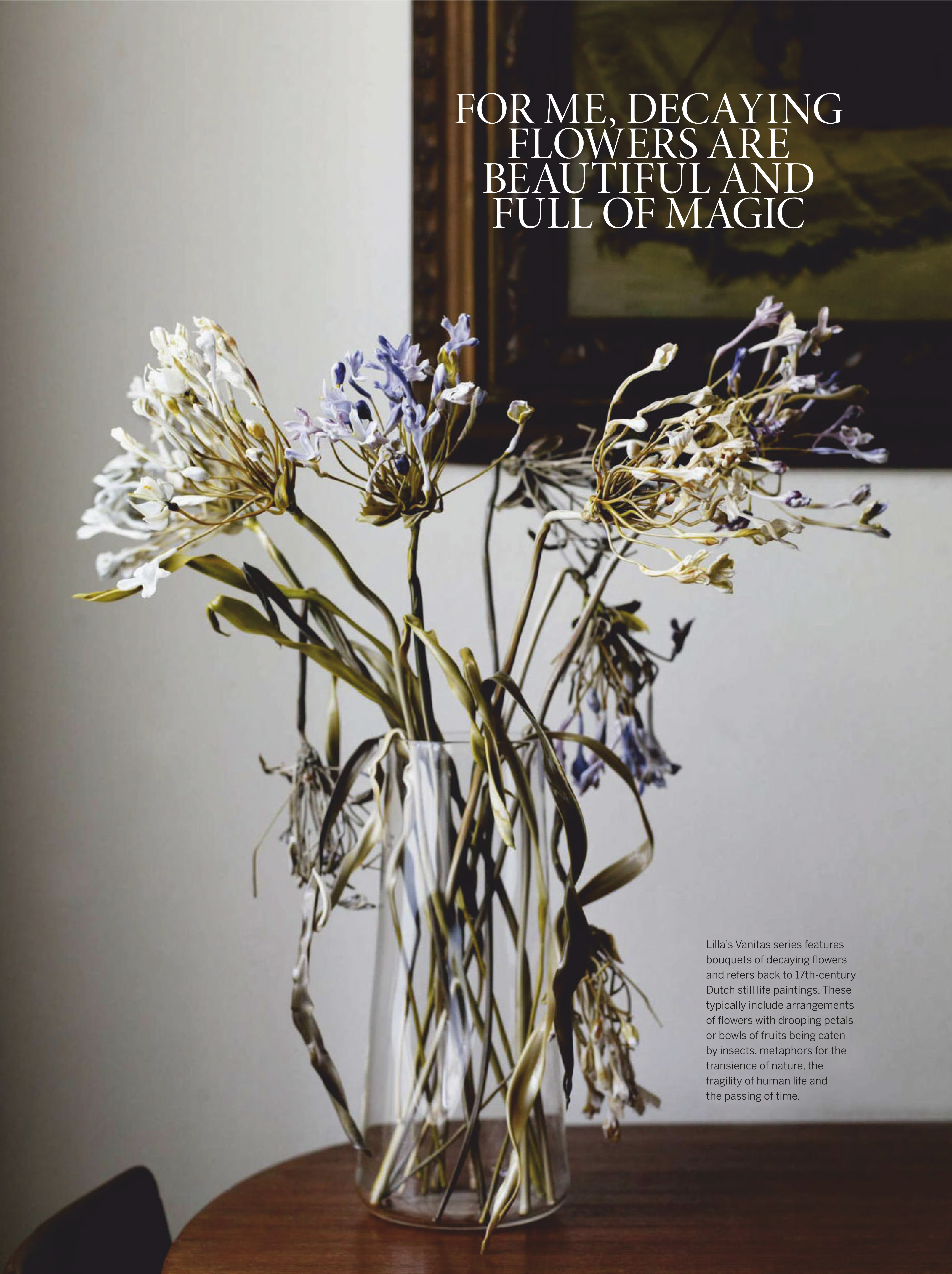
Lilla started her creative career as a jeweller, working with small glass beads. Then after a trip to the Venetian island of Murano, famed for its exquisite glass, she realised that she could use blown glass to make larger pieces. Undaunted by the technical challenge, she duly taught herself to blow glass. As her skills improved, she began to upscale her flower jewellery until in 2004 she started making stand-alone sculptures. And today she creates technically mind-boggling and visually stunning glass pieces ranging from bouquets of the palest pink dog roses to vases of flamboyant peonies and bunches of fragile narcissi complete with their gently twisted, spear-like leaves.

The sculptures are made using the laborious lampworking technique. Each individual piece – petal, stamen, leaf – is made separately out of tiny sections of Murano glass rods that are heated until soft enough to manipulate into shape either by blowing or working with tools. The individual petals are linked by tiny



I SEE A FLOWER AND AM INSPIRED BY AN EMOTION I WANT TO EXPRESS

Lilla trained as a biologist before becoming a glass artist, and her extensive knowledge of botany and love of the natural world allow her to create astonishingly realistic flower sculptures such as this beautifully crafted flowering branch of



> FOR ME, DECAYING FLOWERS ARE BEAUTIFUL AND FULL OF MAGIC

Lilla's Vanitas series features bouquets of decaying flowers and refers back to 17th-century Dutch still life paintings. These typically include arrangements of flowers with drooping petals or bowls of fruits being eaten by insects, metaphors for the transience of nature, the fragility of human life and the passing of time.

Clockwise from top left

A peony made of the palest pink glass; achieving the botanically correct colour for each flower is one of the greatest challenges facing Lilla and she may use up to five differently coloured glass rods to achieve the desired shade.

A group of delicate grape hyacinths ready for assembly into a single sculpture.

Individual petals are joined together using tiny pieces of wire, which are then covered with molten glass; this gives the sculptures more strength.

▷ wires and then the flowerheads are attached to the stem using molten glass. The biggest challenge is creating the correct colours: "It's not like painting, because if you mix two colours in glass making you get stripes, so I layer one colour over another to reach the right shade," she explains. "It's one of the most complicated parts of the process but it is very, very important." Given the complexities of the process, it's surprising to find that Lilla's workspace is very simple. "I just need a table, a lamp and the fire, and all my glass sticks close to me – it's very small," she says modestly.

The inspiration for her work comes from a combination of sources. Her interest in nature is obvious, but less obvious is her family background. "I came from a family of antique sellers and I am sure that world inspired me," she says. And it's true that her Vanitas series shows a clear knowledge of art history. It directly references 17th-century still lifes of flower arrangements, with their artfully placed fallen petals designed to underline the transience of life. Lilla takes these images one step further, making entire arrangements of decaying flowers. The dying flowers with their browning stems and faded petals reproduced so delicately in glass, create an intriguing, strangely alluring image of decay. "For me, decaying flowers are beautiful and full of magic," says Lilla. It's a description that could be applied equally well to her own eye-catching flower sculptures. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Lilla Tabasso is represented by the Venetian gallery Caterina Tognon (caterinatognon.com), and she also undertakes commissions. You can also see Lilla's work this month at The European Fine Art Fair (TEFAF) Maastricht at MECC Maastricht, Forum 100, 6229 GV, Maastricht, the Netherlands. 16-24 March 2019, **tefaf.com**

Spring awakening

Around 120 species and cultivars of narcissi flower at Narzissenfest in northern Germany

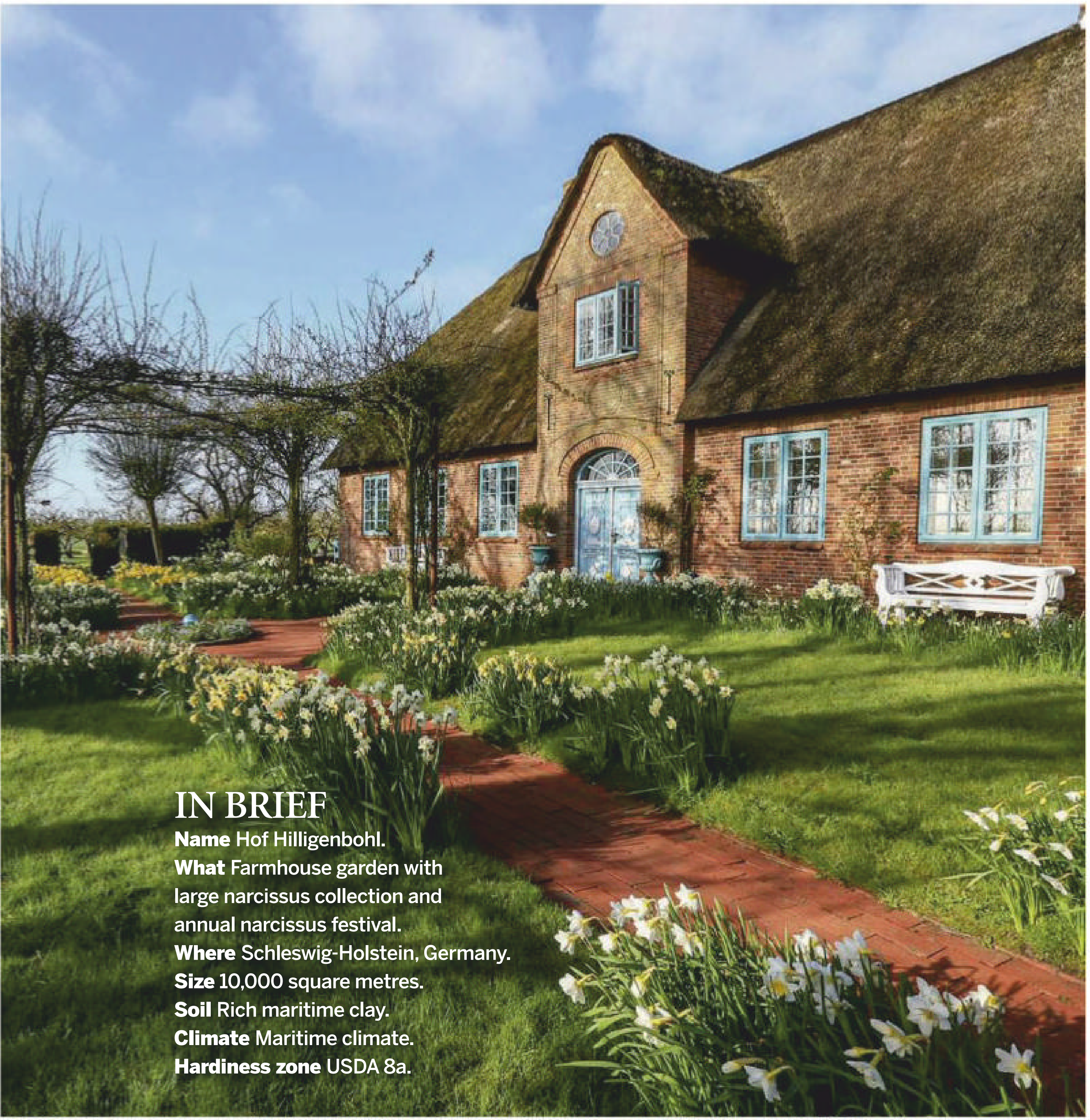
WORDS INA SPERL

The first flowers of spring are always a cause for celebration. Even in the more southerly parts of the UK, where winters are thankfully relatively mild, few things raise the spirits more than the sight of trees coming into leaf or spring bulbs pushing their way through grass. Imagine then how grateful gardeners are in more northern parts of Europe for these first signs of spring.

Dunja Kirchner is one such gardener. Her farmhouse garden, Hilligenbohl Hof, is in the far north of the German state of Schleswig-Holstein, just 12 miles from the Danish border. Here spring starts late, and sometimes the first narcissi are covered in snowdrifts up to 1.5m high. This causes few problems for the tough spring flowers. "They just lie flat on the ground and rise again," says Dunja.

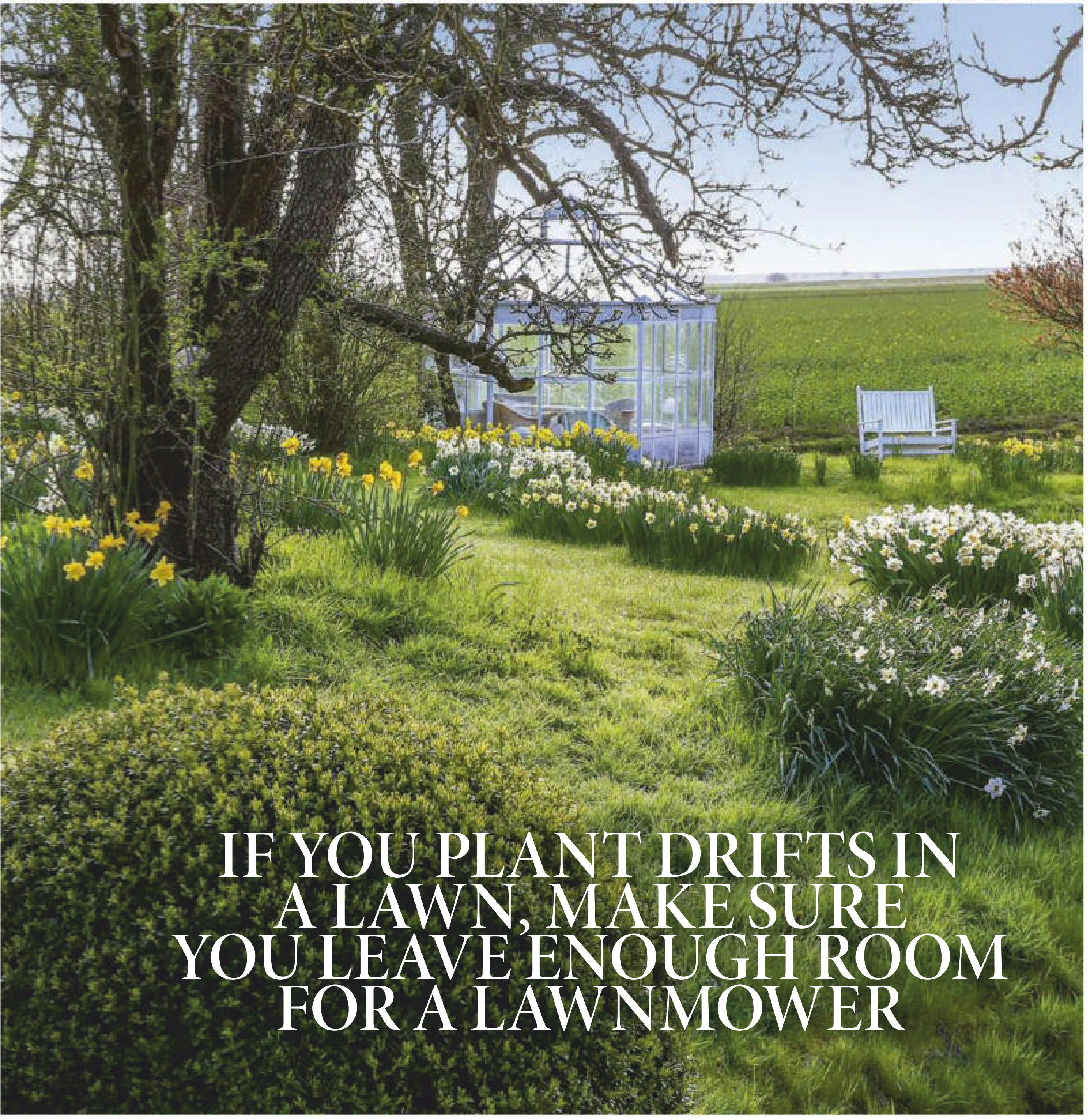
Dunja and her mother Ute have filled the garden of Hilligenbohl Hof with thousands of narcissi. In March and April the lawns turn shades of yellow, white and orange as more than 120 different cultivars and species come into bloom. Naturalised in grass, and planted in circles, in drifts like bold brush strokes and in strips aligned to the house, they take over the garden. "We don't have borders, all our narcissi are in the lawn," says Dunja. "We have 200,000 flowers – a sea of narcissi."

Twenty years ago mother and daughter decided to celebrate this return of spring by organising a festival ▷



IN BRIEF

Name Hof Hilligenbohl.
What Farmhouse garden with large narcissus collection and annual narcissus festival.
Where Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.
Size 10,000 square metres.
Soil Rich maritime clay.
Climate Maritime climate.
Hardiness zone USDA 8a.



IF YOU PLANT DRIFTS IN A LAWN, MAKE SURE YOU LEAVE ENOUGH ROOM FOR A LAWNMOWER

PHOTOGRAPHS THE GARDEN COLLECTION/FP/URSEL BORSTELL

Clockwise from top left
***Fritillaria meleagris* mix with narcissi** that catch the light, such as the pale 'Saint Patrick's Day', the lighter yellow 'Spellbinder', the white 'Flower Record' and 'Golden Harvest.

Edging the path to the house is the pretty, white cultivar 'Lemon Beauty' with a lemon split corona.

Narcissi have naturalised in the grass throughout the garden.

Early narcissi, such as 'Golden Harvest' and 'Carlton', grow beneath an ash tree on the banks of the dyke that marks the garden's edge.

▷ in celebration of all things narcissus. For two days, every April, they open their narcissus-filled garden. The festival, called Narzissenfest, now attracts more than 2,000 visitors every year.

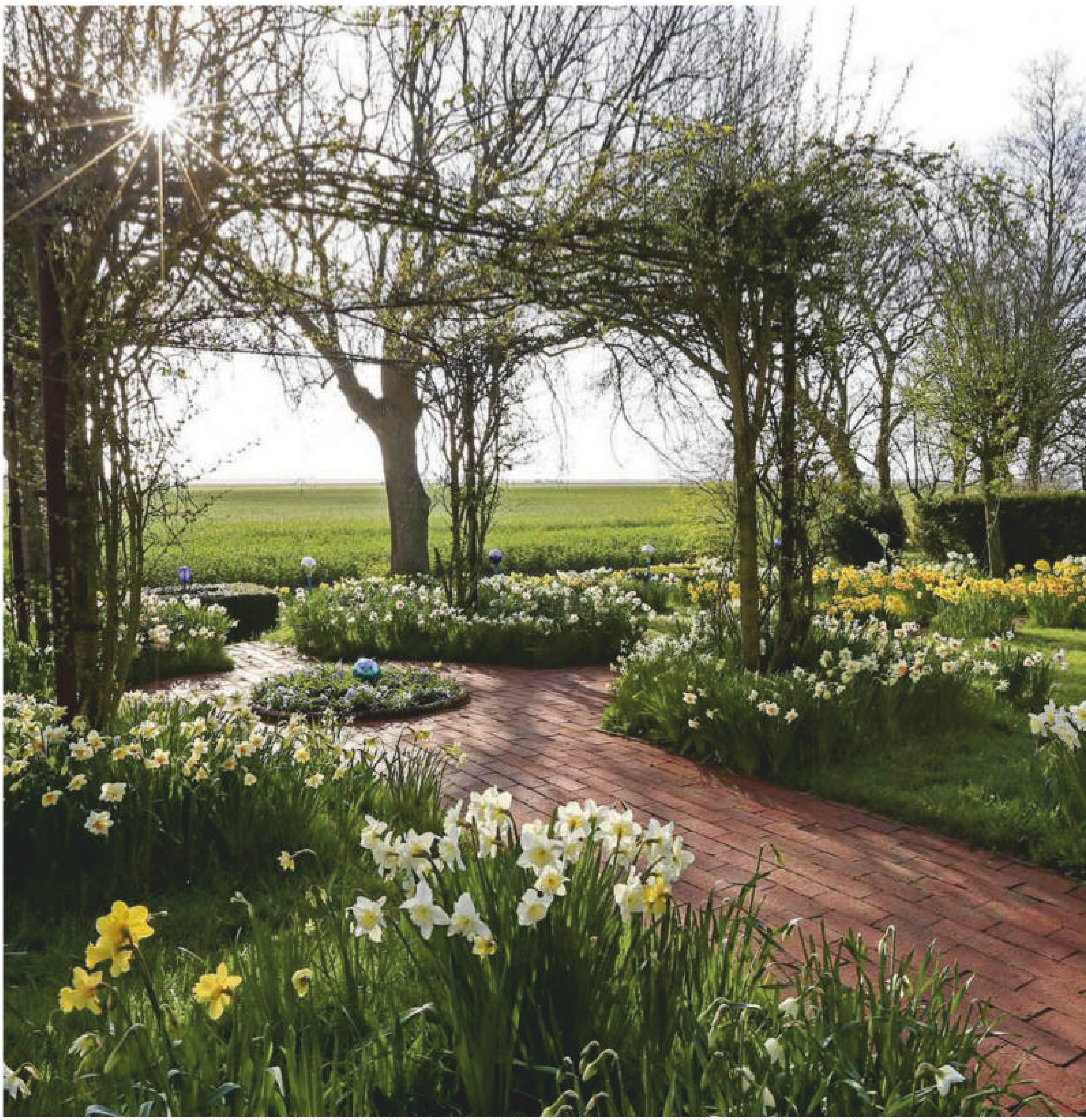
Luckily bulbs thrive in the garden's rich, marine clay, although Ute gives the narcissi a helping hand using a fertiliser that is rich in potassium and phosphorus, which she says is also useful if the bulbs are reluctant to bloom. Her care obviously works as they not only thrive but multiply. Narcissi line the banks of the dyke that separates the garden from surrounding fields; they fill lawns and naturalise around the trees in an old orchard where the blossom of 35 apple trees, including local cultivars such as 'Maren Nissen', as well as mirabelle plums, wild plums and quince add to the beauty of late-flowering cultivars.

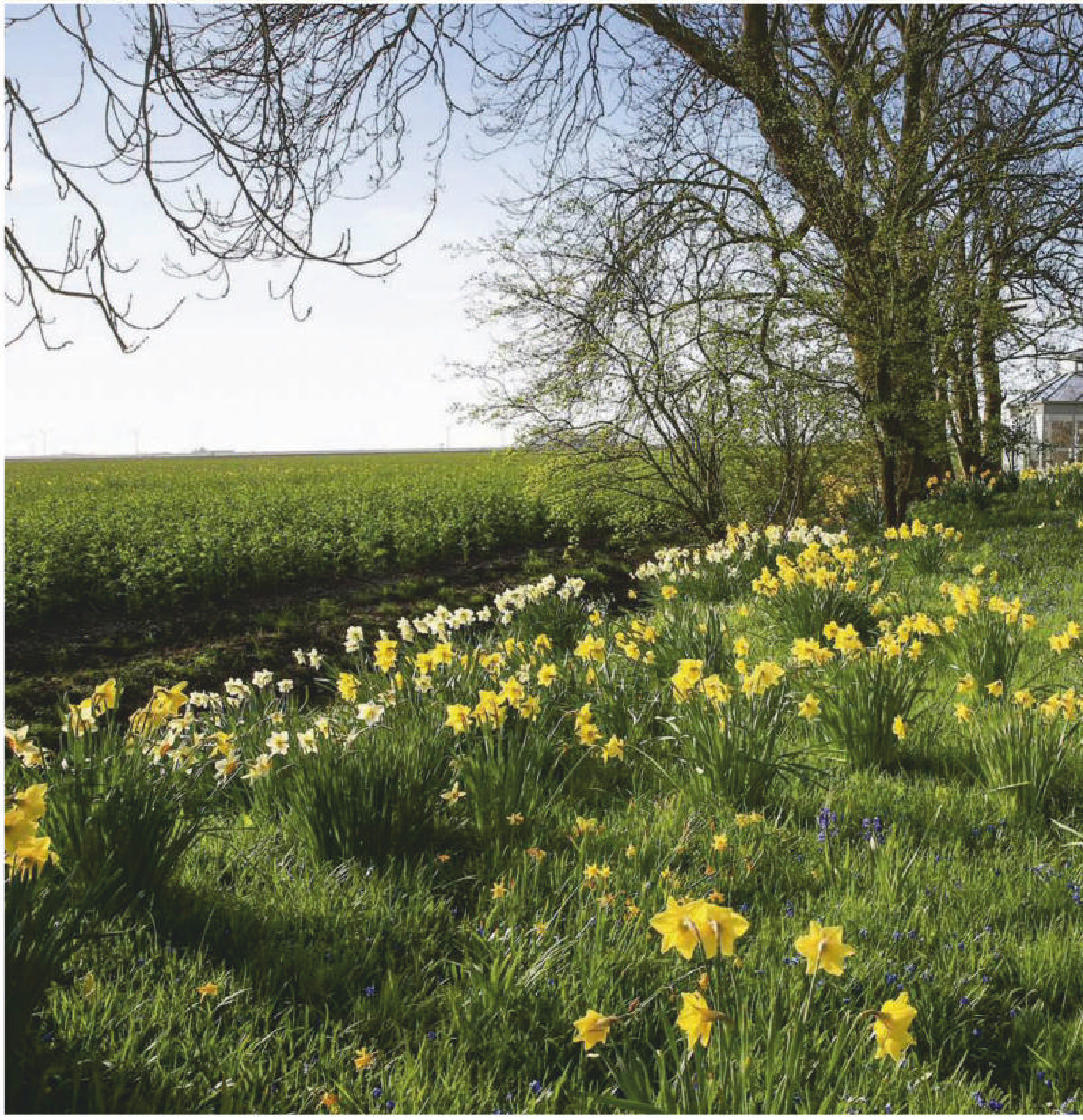
"If you plant drifts in a lawn, make sure you leave enough room for a lawnmower in between," advises Dunja. "And choose your colours well: either pick similar colours or go bold and mix everything." But she does note one downside to growing so many among the grass: "You have to leave them until the foliage turns yellow." By then, the grass between the plants has grown high, and to bridge the time until everything is cut with a strimmer, Ute and Dunja have added some tulips – dark 'Queen of Night', pink 'Don Quichotte' and white 'Maureen'. Two weeks after mowing, the garden is completely green, with not a hint of white or gold in sight. Until, of course, the following spring. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

This year the Narzissenfest takes place over the weekend of 27-28 April 2019, 11am-6pm, admission €7. The garden is also open by appointment for groups of 20 or more from 15-30 April, For details visit **narzissenfest.de**

Turn the page for 15 key narcissus





Clockwise from top left

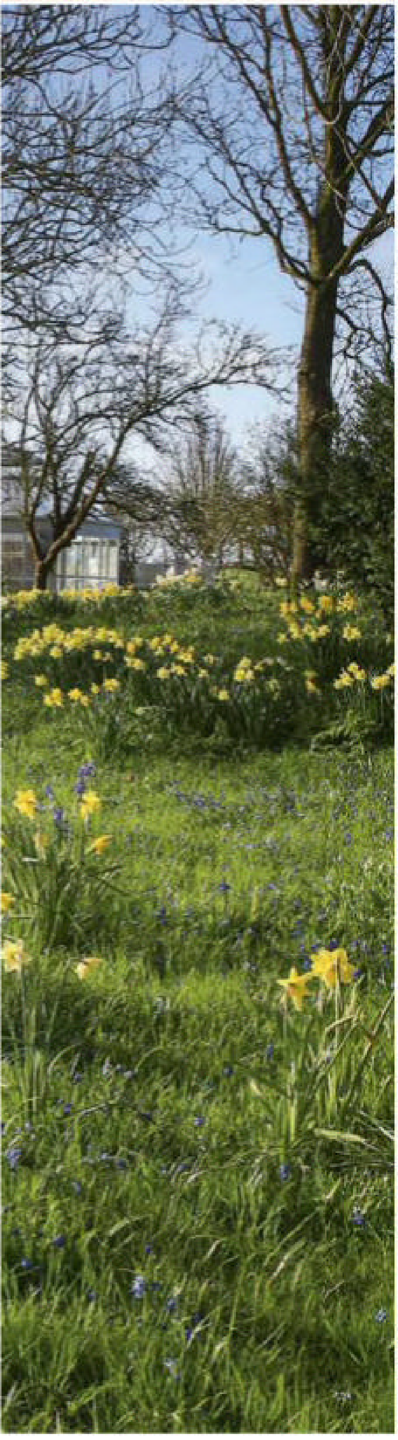
Two white narcissus – the yellow-cupped 'Ice Follies' and orange-cupped 'Flower Drift' – edge the brick paths that meet beneath a rose-covered pergola.

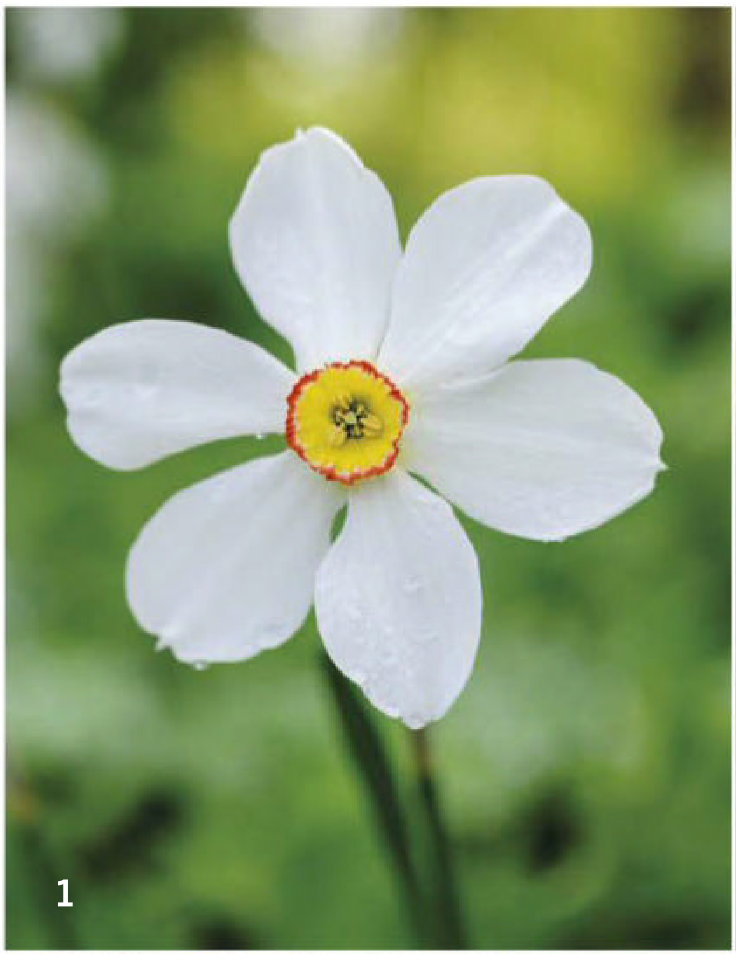
A small, restored brick stable is a perfect backdrop for a colourful mix of cultivars, including 'Flower Record', 'Spellbinder' and 'Saint Patrick's Day'.

Drifts of 'Mount Hood' and 'Cassata' add colour to the orchard in advance of the apple trees' blossom.

In the rough grass near the dyke, large narcissi, such as 'Golden Harvest' and 'Carlton', combine with the smaller Cyclamineus cultivars, including 'February Gold' and 'Tête-à-tête'.

CHOOSE YOUR COLOURS WELL: EITHER PICK SIMILAR COLOURS OR GO BOLD AND MIX EVERYTHING

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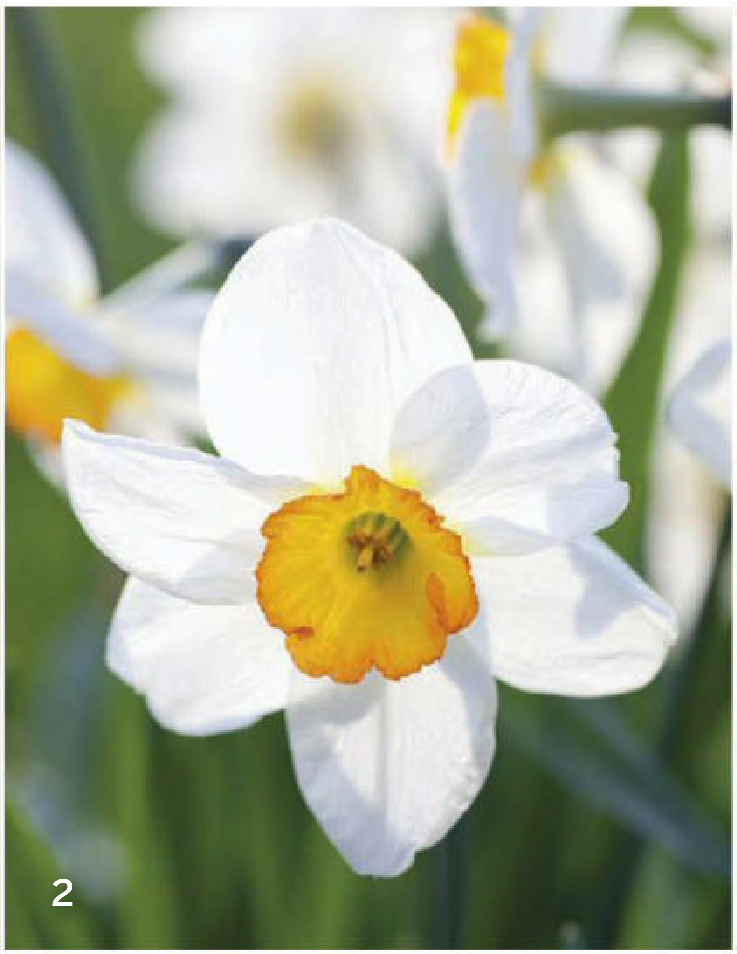
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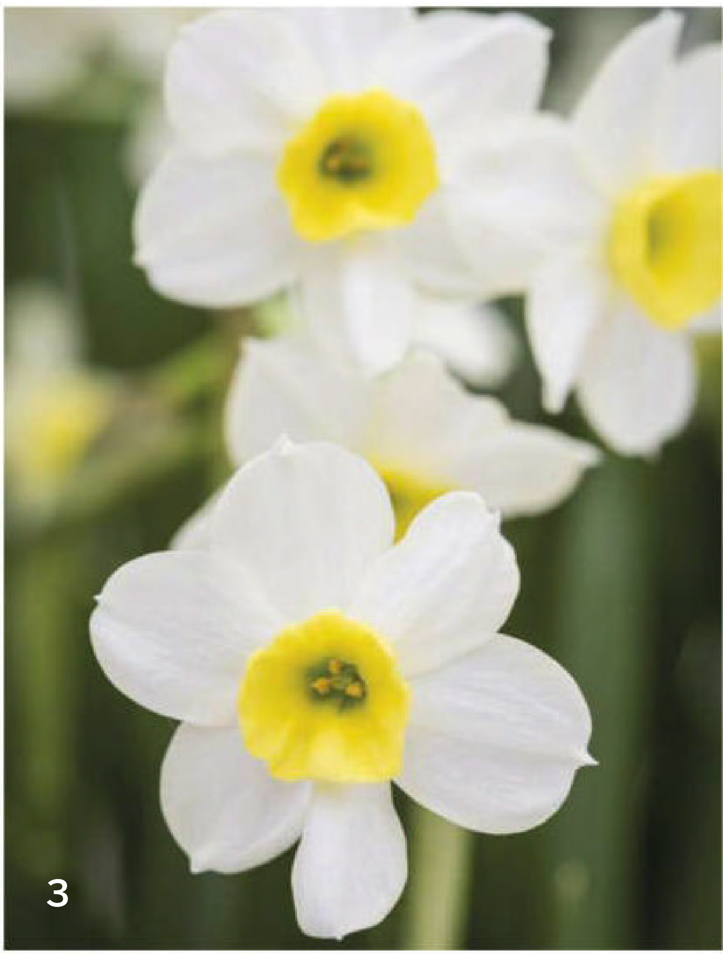
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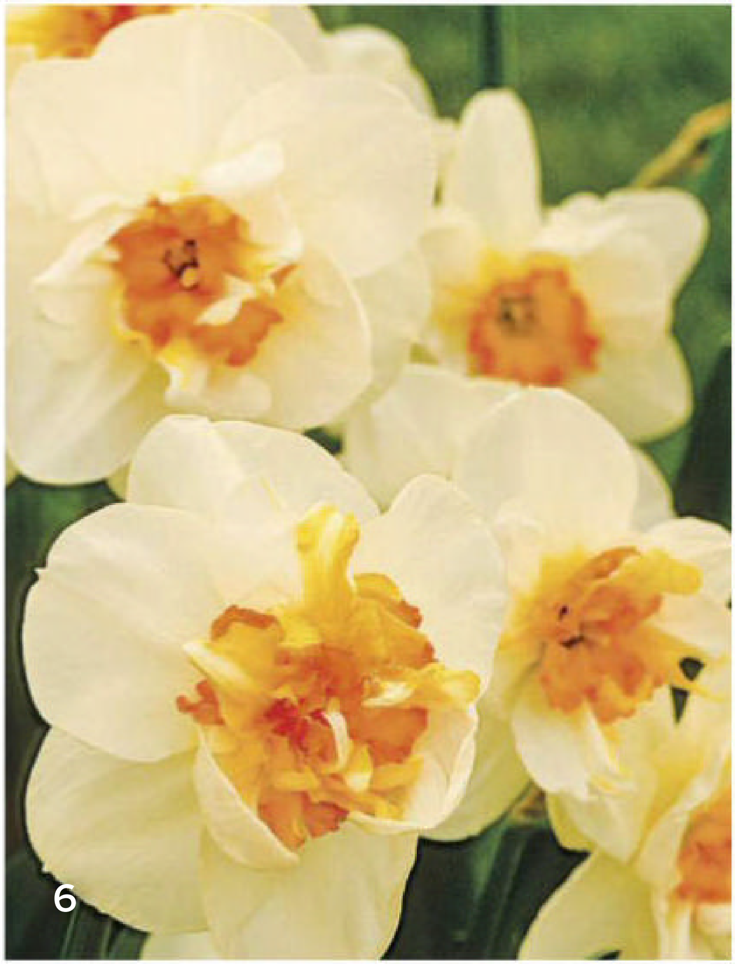
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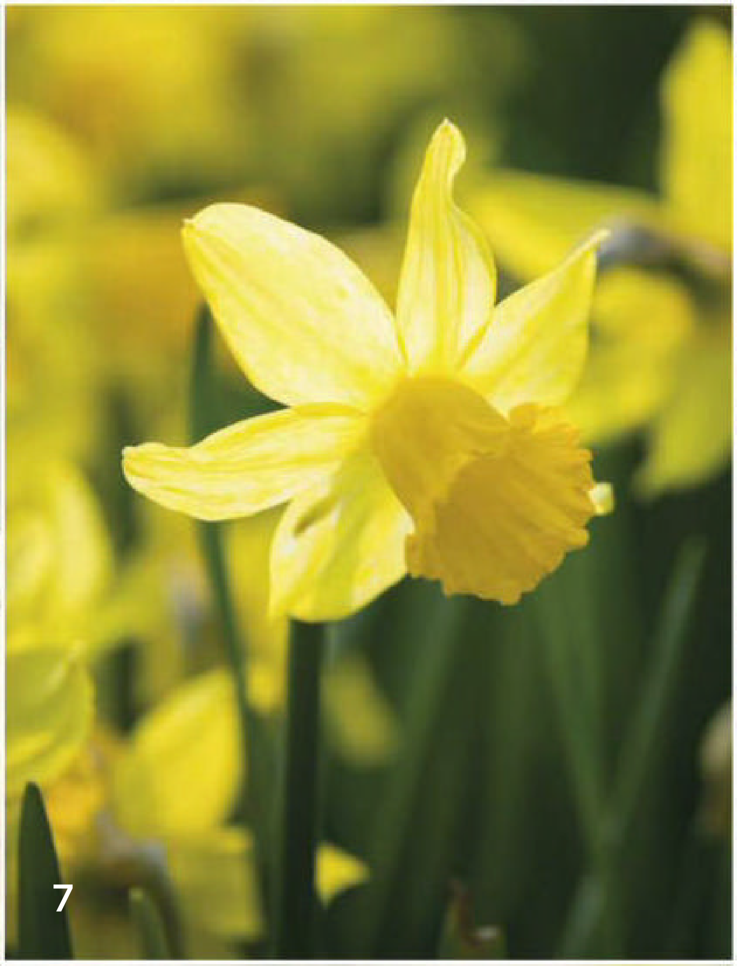
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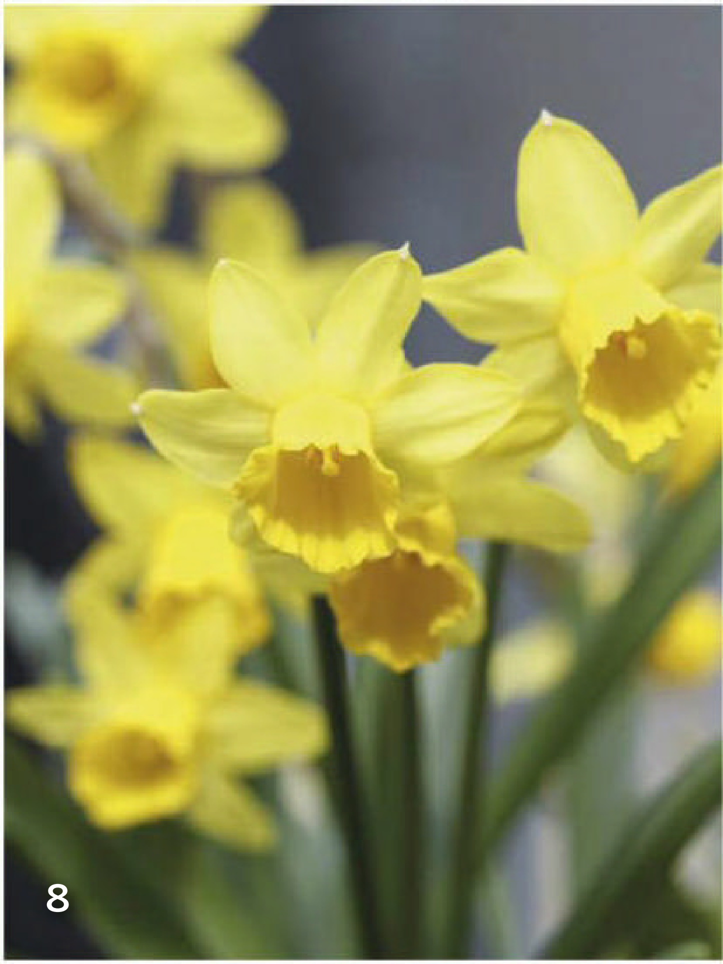
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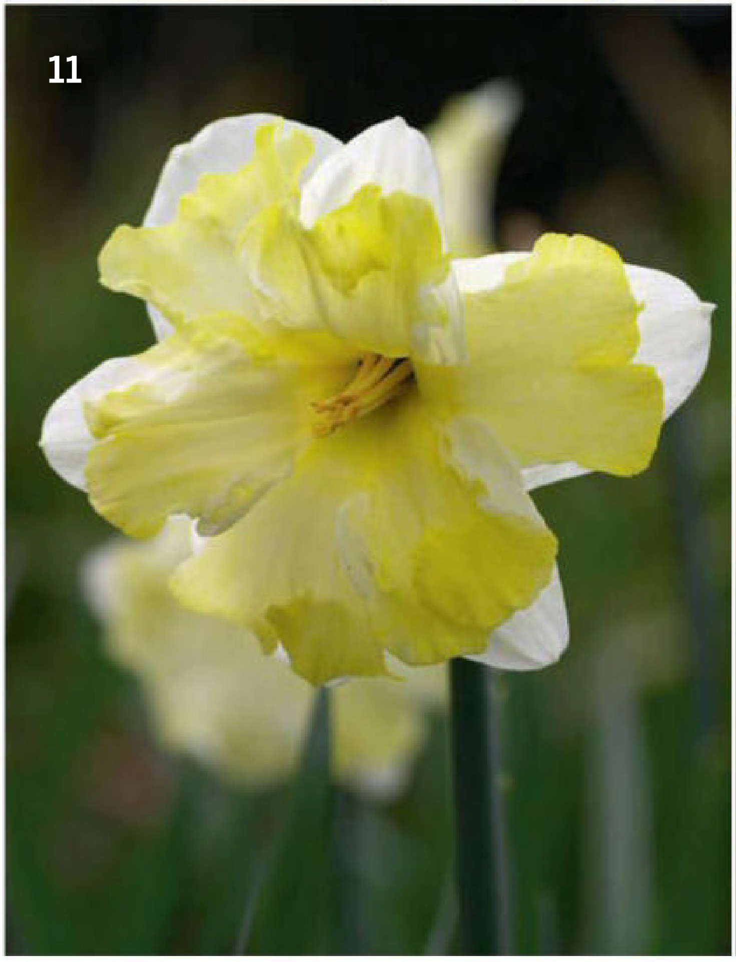
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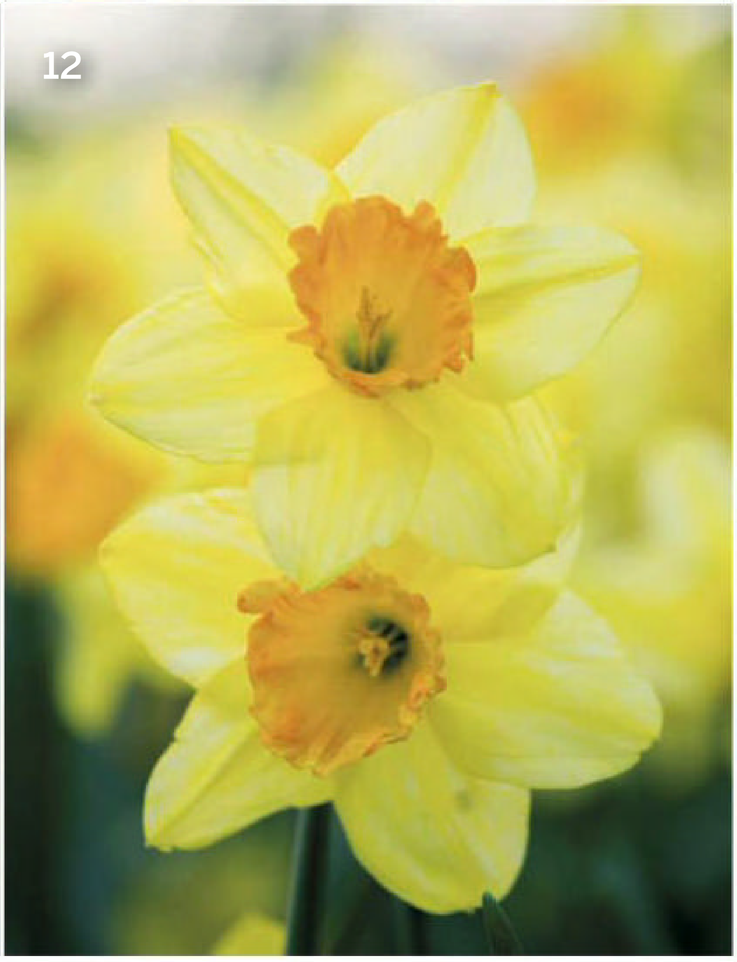
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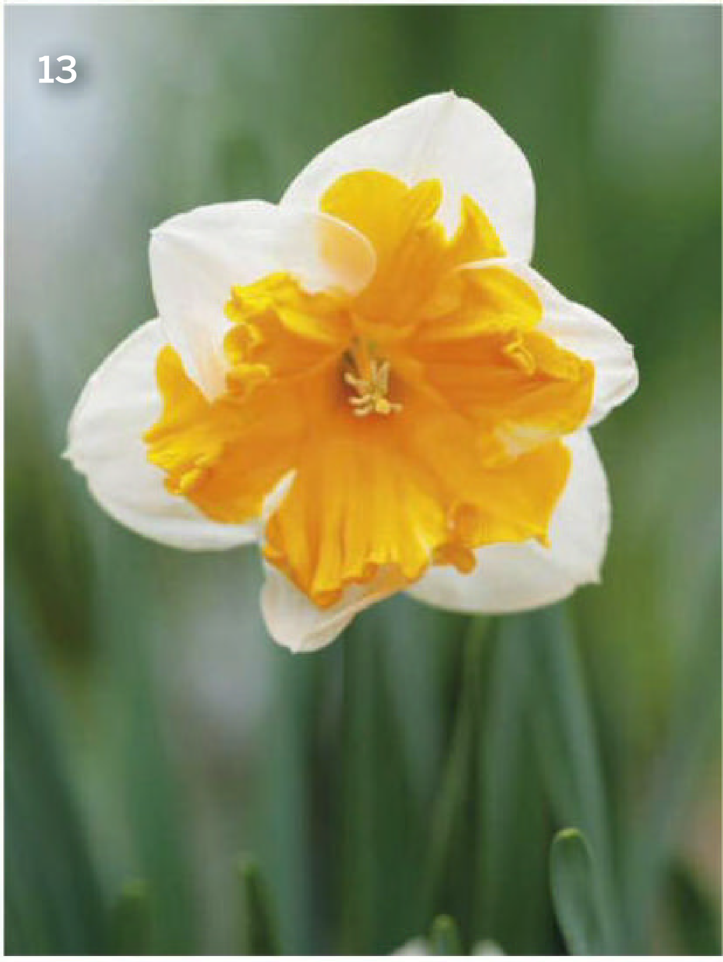
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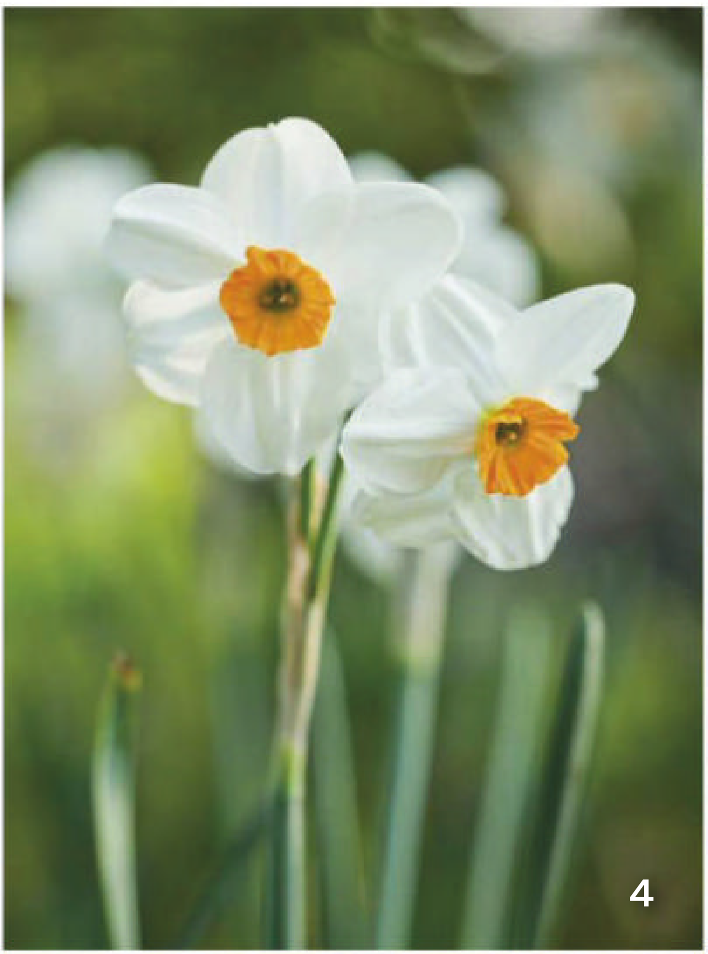

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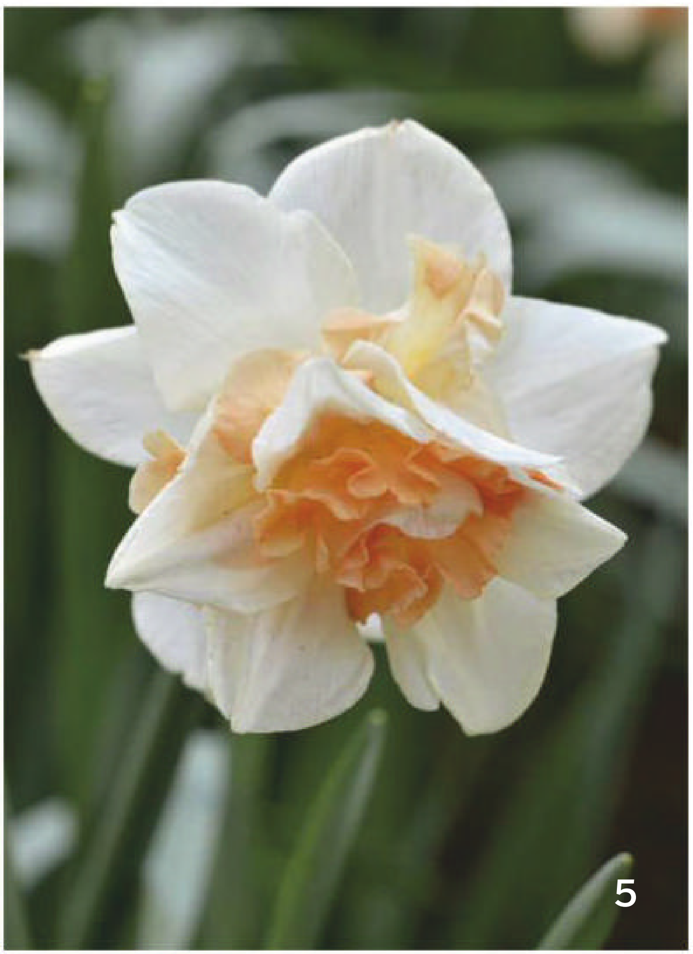

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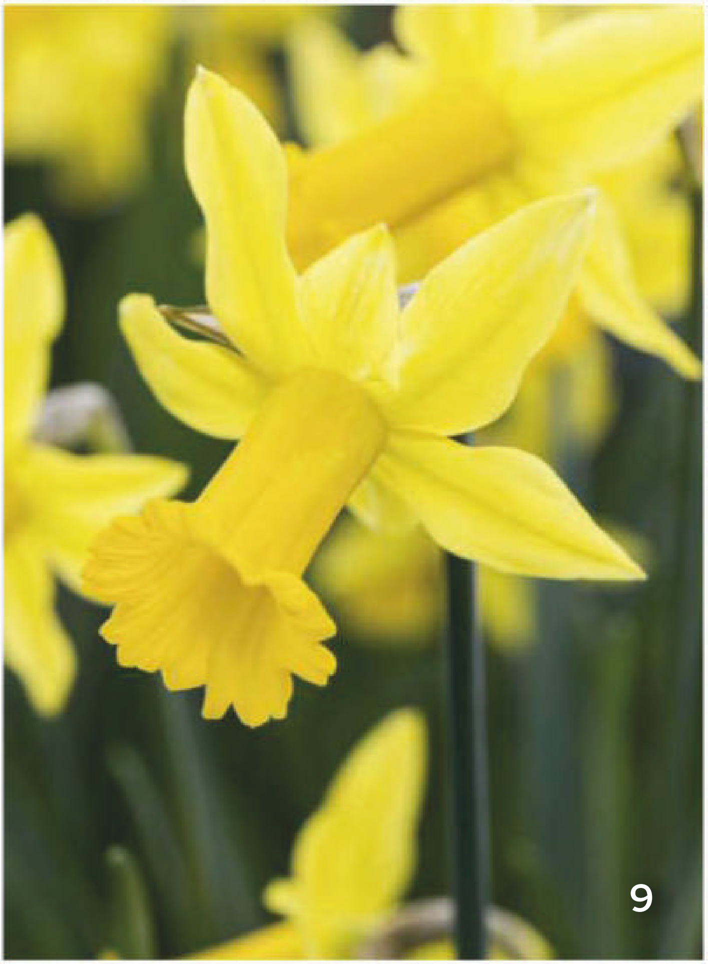

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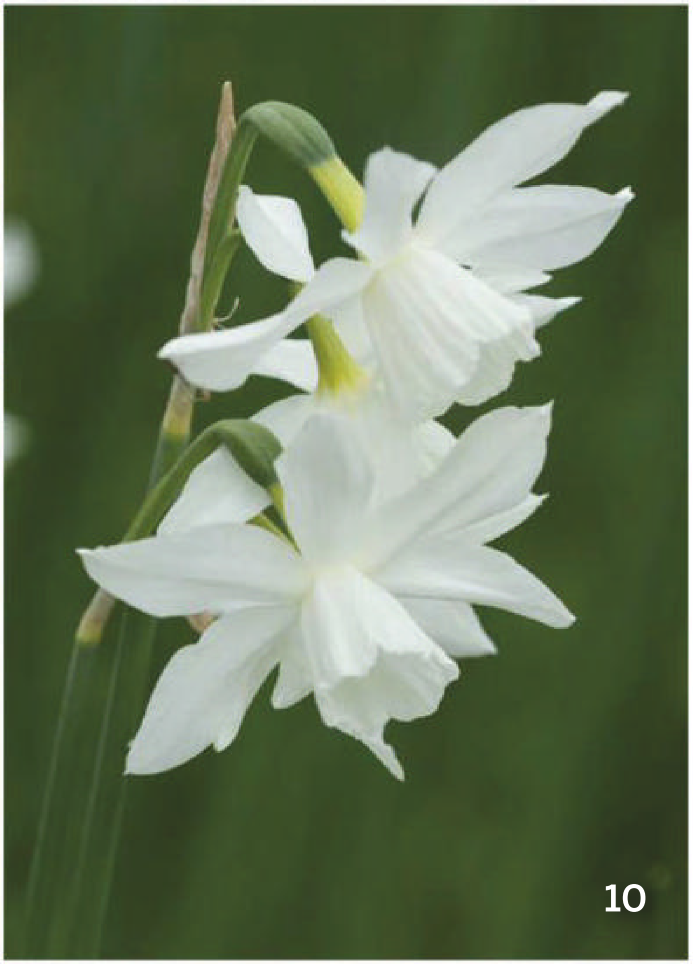

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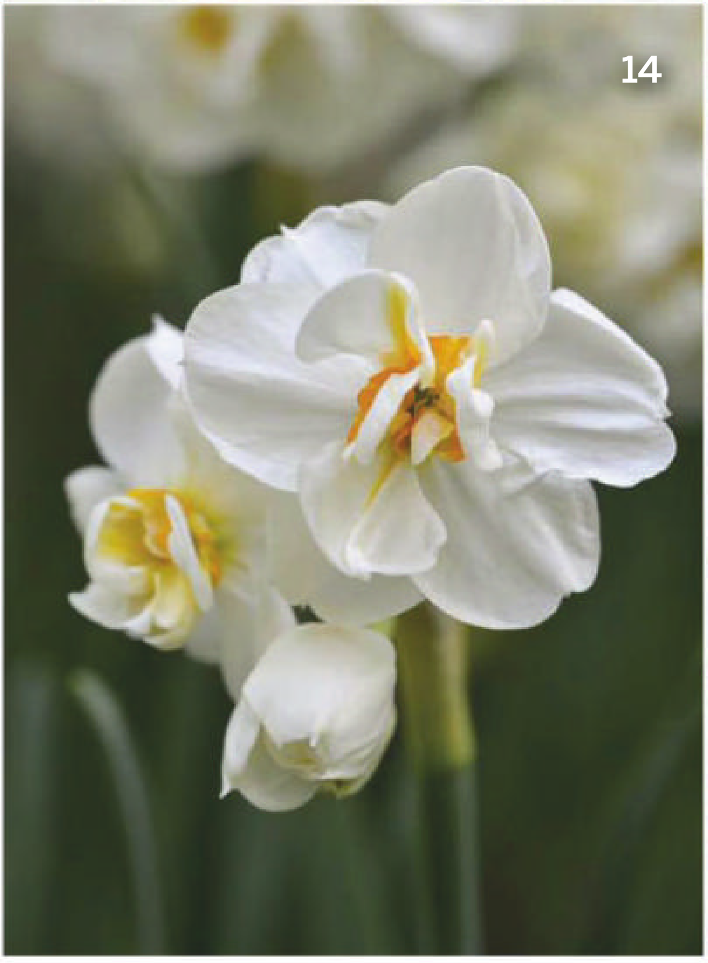

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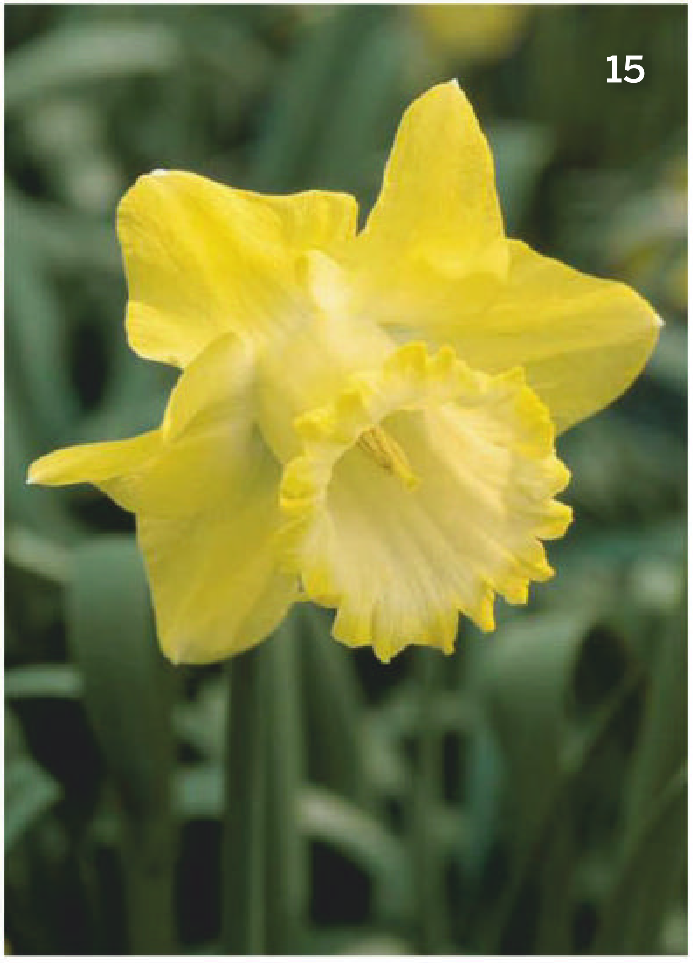

15

15 KEY NARCISSI FROM HOF HILLIGENBOHL

1 ***Narcissus*** **'Actaea'**
This fragrant, late Poeticus narcissus naturalises well and, in this northern garden, has been known to flower as late as 1 May. It is one of Dunja's favourites. "When the flowers catch the sun," she says, "they glow like small lanterns." 45cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b†.

2 ***Narcissus*** **'Flower Record'**
Dunja loves this mid-season, Large-cupped cultivar for its bright colours: the short, orange corona has a deeper orange rim. The effect is especially striking when viewed from a distance. 40cm.

3 ***Narcissus*** **'Minnow'**
A small Tazetta narcissus, which has several flowers to a stem. It flowers mid-season and looks wonderful when planted between taller narcissi. 25cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 5a-9b.

4 ***Narcissus*** **'Geranium'**
A popular, white Tazetta narcissus with an orange corona that does not fade. Its fragrant flowers open late in the season and keep well in a vase. 40cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

5 ***Narcissus*** **'Replete'**
Dunja especially likes this frilly Double narcissus because of its beautiful salmon-coloured corona. It flowers in mid-season and remains attractive over a long period. 35cm. USDA 4a-8b.

6 ***Narcissus*** **'Flower Drift'**
This lavishly flowering Double narcissus, is well balanced and tends not to fall over in the rain. The highly scented flowers, which have a cream and orange centre, open mid-season. 40cm.

7 ***Narcissus*** **'February Gold'**
A vigorous Cyclamineus narcissus that naturalises quickly. Its yellow flowers open early and sit on sturdy stems. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

8 ***Narcissus*** **'Tête-à-tête'**
A small, Cyclamineus narcissus that naturalises easily. Works well when grown alongside 'February Gold' and yellow Large-cupped cultivars. 20cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

9 ***Narcissus*** **'Peeping Tom'**
This lovely, bright-yellow Cyclamineus narcissus with reflexed petals likes to run wild. 30cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

10 ***Narcissus*** **'Thalia'**
An elegant Triandrus narcissus, with white flowers that look beautiful in the spring sunlight. Better suited for a border than the lawn. Doesn't like to be cut too early. 40cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

11 ***Narcissus*** **'Cassata'**
When it opens, this spectacular Split-corona narcissus is a lemon-yellow colour, but as the flowers mature they fade to white. 35cm. USDA 4a-8b.

12 ***Narcissus*** **'Fortune'**
A mid-season, yellow Large-cupped narcissus with orange cups. It's one that Ute and Dunja like to plant between bright-yellow cultivars. 45cm. RHS H6.

13 ***Narcissus*** **'Orangery'**
With its open, bright-orange trumpet, this robust Split-corona cultivar looks stunning when seen en masse from a distance. Flowers mid season. 45cm.

14 ***Narcissus*** **'Sir Winston Churchill'**
A Double cultivar that has several flowers to a stem like a Tazetta. The flowers open late and have a rich perfume. 40cm. RHS H6.

15 ***Narcissus*** **'Spellbinder'**
Ute and Dunja both like the variation in the yellow of this gorgeous, mid-season Trumpet narcissus. 40cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-8b.

1 JASON INGRAM; 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13 & 15 ELKE BORKOWSKI, ROBERT MABIC, MARK BOLTON, JO WHITWORTH, FHF GREENMEDIA, HOWARD RICE / ALL GAP PHOTOS; 3, 5, 6, 8 & 14 MBPIMAGES, NATHALIE PASQUEL, ALAIN KUBACSI, BARBARA ELLGER / ALL THE GARDEN COLLECTION / FP; 11 GLENN HARPER / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

GARDENS TO VISIT

From urban courtyards to historic landscapes, there's a wealth of gardens to be discovered beyond those on the regular gardens-to-visit list. We've chosen 25 – open only occasionally and all for charity – that offer insight and inspiration to every garden visitor, expert and enthusiast alike

WORDS **ALYS HURN**

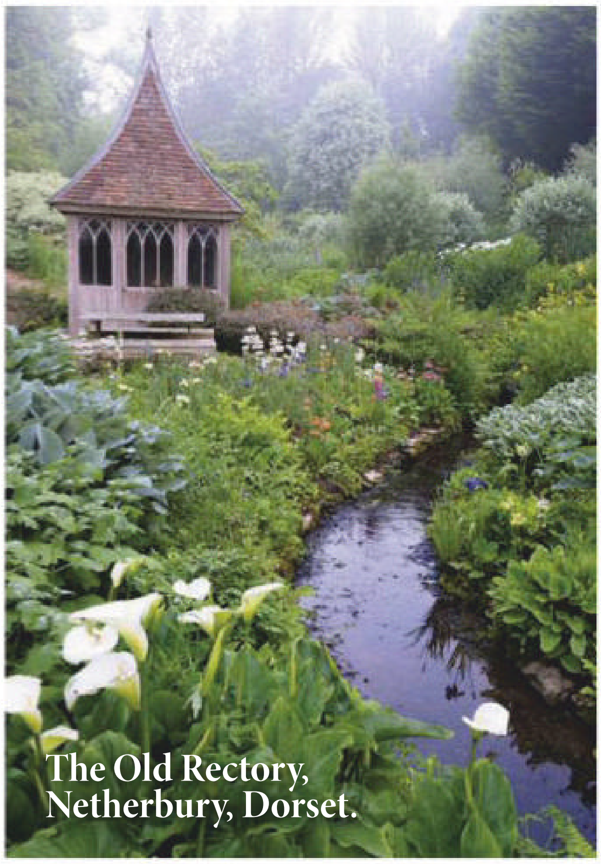
HOTEL ENDSLEIGH, DEVON

Recommended by garden designer Andrew Duff: "Endsleigh is my secret garden; I like to imagine that no one else knows it exists. This Repton design defines everything that a garden is meant to be: a tamed wilderness wrapped around the River Tamar slowly fragmenting into the countryside beyond. A must for those looking to be enveloped in a quintessentially English garden."

Milton Abbot, Tavistock, Devon PL19 0PQ. Open for NGS 12 May and 7 July, 11am-4pm.

MARIANNE MAJERUS. DESIGN JEFFRY WYATTVILLE, HUMPHRY REPTON

South Wood Farm, Devon.



The Old Rectory, Netherbury, Dorset.

Malverleys, Hampshire.

JASON INGRAM X2; CAROLE DRAKE / GAP PHOTOS

SOUTH WOOD FARM, DEVON

A limited colour palette of purple, pink and white gives this flower garden, designed by Arne Maynard, a contemporary twist. A particular highlight is the front garden, where sculptural topiary and trained fruit trees provide structure and create a stark contrast to the swathes of perennials and trained roses repeated through the borders. Cotleigh, Honiton, Devon EX14 9HU. Open for NGS 21-22 September, 2-5pm. By arrangement 1 May – 31 July.

THE OLD RECTORY, NETHERBURY, DORSET

A wonderful example of an established bog garden, where hostas, irises and primulas take centre stage in early summer. Other highlights include an orchard underplanted with narcissi and camassias. Netherbury, Beaminster, Dorset DT6 5NB. Open for NGS 21 April, 26 May and 28 May, 11am-5pm. By arrangement 1-30 June.

THE OLD RECTORY, LITTON CHENEY, DORSET

This garden boasts a natural woodland area of four acres with springs and streams running through it, a natural swimming pool planted with native plants, a rose garden and a front garden designed by Arne Maynard. Litton Cheney, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 9AH. Open for NGS 5 May, 8 May and 16 June, 2-5pm. By arrangement 5 February – 31 December.

WUDSTON HOUSE, WILTSHIRE

Thanks to the garden owner's passion for horticulture, Wudston contains a wealth of little-known plants and wild-collected species. But ultimately, the perennial meadow – a breathtaking example of ecologist James Hitchmough's planting prowess – steals the show. High Street, Wedhampton, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 3QE. Open by arrangement 1 June – 30 September.

MALVERLEYS, HAMPSHIRE

Recommended by landscape designer Mark Gregory: "Walking into Malverleys, no matter what time of year, is just magical. The breadth of horticulture is impressive and the garden is full of highly unusual and rare plant material, seamlessly woven together with extensive use of formal topiary shapes." Fullers Lane, East End, Newbury, Hampshire RG20 0AA. Open for NGS 5 June and 21 August, 11am-5pm.

FAIRLIGHT END, SUSSEX

A garden that flies in the face of its windswept, sloping aspect, with split levels and informal herbaceous borders near the house, and an extensive flower meadow below. A manicured lawn with a Corten steel wall looks out to a borrowed landscape. Pett Road, Pett, Hastings, Sussex TN35 4HB. Open for NGS 2 May, 2-5pm. 9 June, 11-5pm. By arrangement 1 May – 30 September.

SANDHILL FARM HOUSE

Home and teaching garden of Rosemary Alexander, avid plant collector and head of The English Gardening School. Expect a well thought out design and unusual groupings of plants filling out the colour-themed borders, dry garden and small woodland garden. Nyewood Road, Rogate, Petersfield, Sussex GU31 5HU. Open for NGS 13-14 April and 28-29 September, 2-5pm. By arrangement, 1 February – 31 October.

GOODNESTONE PARK GARDENS, KENT

A historic garden with old specimen trees and a cornus collection. The walled garden is split into three successional garden rooms with a central view towards the church tower in the distance. The arboretum, gravel garden and woodland garden have lots to offer for plant inspiration. Wingham, Canterbury, Kent CT3 IPL. Open for NGS 2 June, 11am-5pm.

8 DENE COURT, ESSEX

Once a frequent gold-medal exhibitor at RHS Chelsea Flower Show, owner Shelia Chapman now puts all her energy into her immaculate garden. Growing on a long pergola is a large selection of unusual clematis, roses and other climbers. Chignall Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2JQ. Open for NGS on various dates from 22 May – 8 September. By arrangement 1 May – 31 August.

MOLESHILL HOUSE, SURREY

A romantic-style design with many pleached trees, including an avenue of whitebeam underplanted with spring bulbs running ▷

▷ the length of the garden. Don't miss the stumpery with its hostas and ferns. The Fairmile, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1BG. Open for NGS 27 May, 16 June, 8 September, 2-5pm. By arrangement 1 May – 30 September.

2 LITTLEBURY ROAD, LONDON

A contemporary plant lovers' paradise curated by garden designer and writer Jack Wallington. Tropical plants and cut flowers fill the house and the small garden has a micro-pond and a green wall of 50 different fern species. Clapham, London SW4 6DN. Open for NGS 8 September, 1-6pm.

51 THE CHASE, LONDON

Home to designer Charles Rutherfoord, every inch of this urban oasis is inhabited by plants. The garden is at its most spectacular in spring, thanks to an incredible display of tulips planted alongside iris and tree peonies. London SW4 0NP. Open for NGS 28 April, 12-5pm. 2 May, 5.30-8pm.

LLANOVER, GWENT

Recommended by garden designer Sarah Price: "When you step inside the circular walled garden you don't expect to see a raised plateau of water, a calm weir that holds back the rush of the Rhyd-y-Meirch stream, which playfully invites you to explore the garden. The unusual trees and shrubs are the bounty of generations of globe-trotting plant hunters." Nr Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 9EF. Open for NGS 31 March, 2-5pm. By arrangement 1 April – 31 October.

BRYNGWYN, CEREDIGION

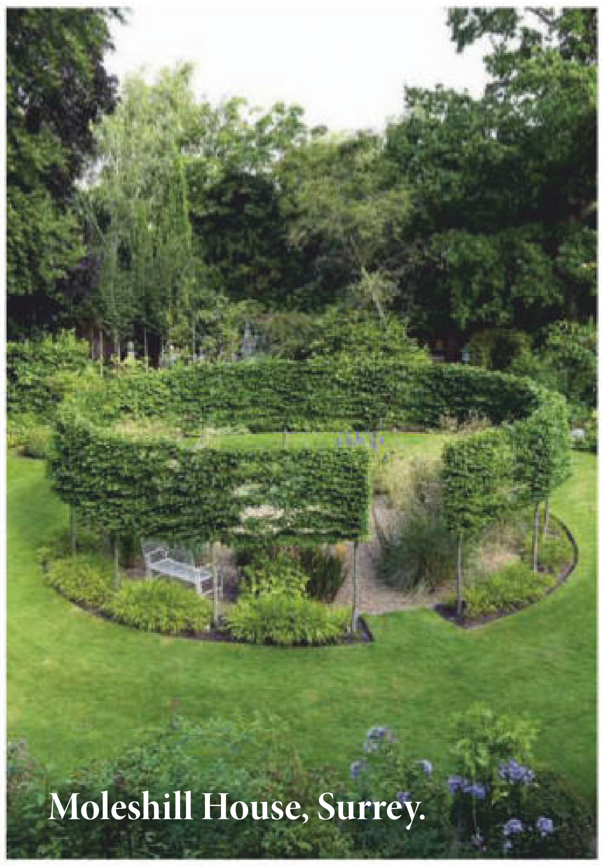
A haven for wildlife, Bryngwyn exudes rural charm. The wildflower-rich hay meadows, pond and orchard, containing heritage apples and pears, have been managed to improve plant habitat and diversity. Capel Seion, Aberystwyth, Cardiganshire SY23 4EE. Open for NGS 15 and 22 June, 10.30am-4.30pm.

TEMPLE GUITING MANOR AND BARNS, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Designed by Jinny Blom, these formal gardens feature structural planting alongside relaxed, romantic borders. A network of meandering walkways takes you through a series of rooms, past a 30m lily pond and kitchen garden. Temple Guiting, Cheltenham, GL54 5RP. Open for NGS 9 June, 11am-4pm.

BROCKHAMPTON COTTAGE, HEREFORDSHIRE

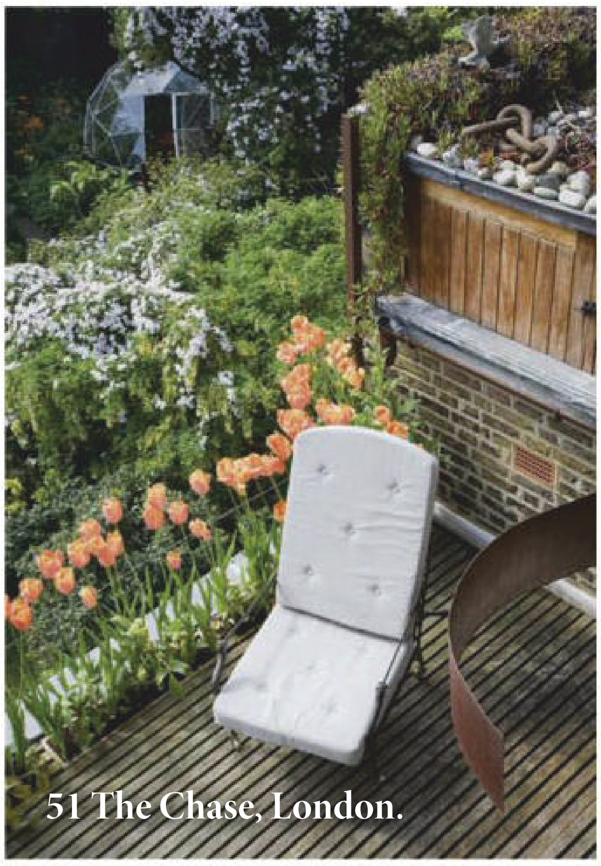
This extensive hilltop garden is the stunning result of a collaboration between designer Tom Stuart-Smith and owner Peter Clay. A mown path leads you down the hill through five acres of wildflower meadow to a grand lake and arboretum in the valley below. Brockhampton, Herefordshire HR1 4TQ. Open for NGS 9 June, 1-4pm.



Moleshill House, Surrey.

Stretton Old Hall, Cheshire

Brockhampton Cottage, Herefordshire.



51 The Chase, London.

STRETTON OLD HALL, CHESHIRE

This garden is big on scale and texture. Perennials are favoured here and individual gardens have their own style. Recent changes include a new theme in the wildflower meadow. Stretton, Tilston, Malpas, Cheshire SY14 7JA. Open for NGS 7 July, 11am-5pm.

THE OLD VICARAGE, WHIXLEY

In this timelessly elegant walled garden, mixed borders planted with old roses and perennials line the terrace and gravel pathways that lead to secluded seating areas. Church Street, Whixley, Yorkshire YO26 8AR. Open for NGS 6 May, 8 May and 9 June, 1.30-5pm. By arrangement 1 May – 30 June.

SILVERSTONE FARM, NORFOLK

A homage to 17th-century Dutch gardens, this formal space comprises topiarised hedging and sweeping lawns. Elegant architectural pieces provide focal points through sculptural planting. North Elmham, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5EX. Open for NGS 15 September, 1-5pm.

OLD RECTORY, QUINTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

This site's 18th-century heritage and ties to Quinton church play out in features such as long walks and parterres, but modernised with living green walls and contemporary planting. Preston Deanery Road, Quinton, Northamptonshire NN7 2ED. Open for NGS 2 June and 1 September, 10am-5pm.

BOWBROOK ALLOTMENT COMMUNITY, SHROPSHIRE

This community garden holds the RHS National Certificate of Distinction and has 93 organic plots on its five-acre site. There

NICOLA STOCKEN - MOLESHILL / GAP PHOTOS; STEPHEN GORE;
SUZIE GIBBONS / GAP PHOTOS; SABINA RÜBER

are lots of natural children's play areas such as a willow tunnel and turf spiral. Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 5BT. Open by arrangement 1 April – 30 September.

DURNAMUCK, SCOTLAND

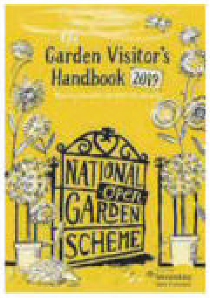
Views across Little Loch Broom provide the backdrop to this stunning garden filled with species native to the Southern Hemisphere. Warmed by the Gulf Stream, the unusual plants thrive here, and swathes of colour-rich blooms teamed with textural grasses dazzle in every direction. Little Loch Broom, Wester Ross IV23 2QZ. Open for Scotland's Gardens Scheme 21 July and 25 August, 12-5pm. By arrangement 1 May – 30 September.

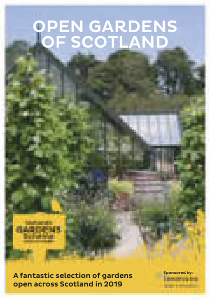
JACKSON'S WOLD, YORKSHIRE

A series of traditional garden rooms filled with crowd-pleasing plants such as old roses, geraniums and salvias. On the outer edges of the garden, wilder planting areas soften the transition into the surrounding countryside. Sherburn, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 8QJ. Open for NGS 12 May and 23 June, 1-5pm.

PORTRACK, THE GARDEN OF COSMIC SPECULATION, SCOTLAND

Recommended by plantsman Matthew Biggs: "This extraordinary 30-acre contemporary masterpiece by landscape architect and theorist Charles Jencks combines land art, sculpture and plants to visualise themes from the story of the universe. With its curvaceous mounds, lakes and helixes, it transports gardening and the gardener to another dimension." Holywood DG2 0RW. Open for Scotland's Gardens Scheme 5 May, 11am-5pm. □

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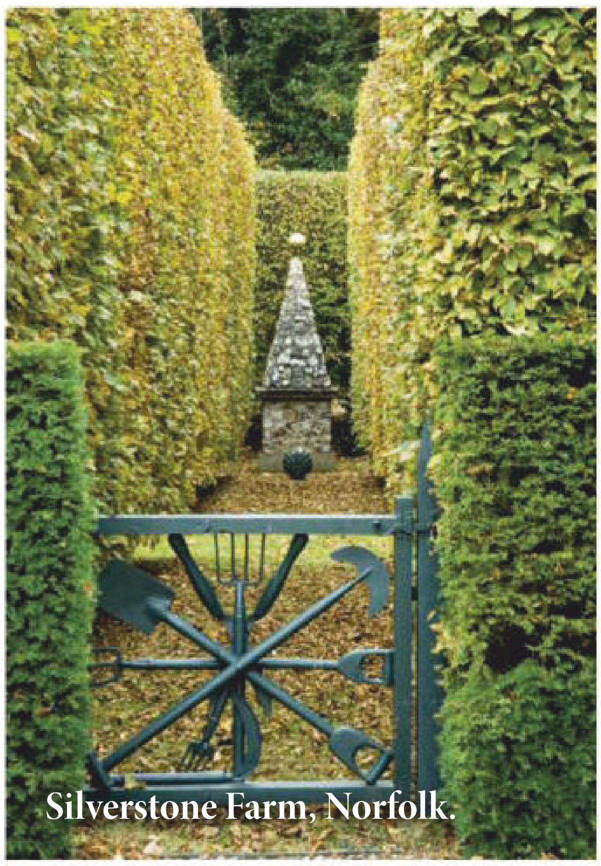
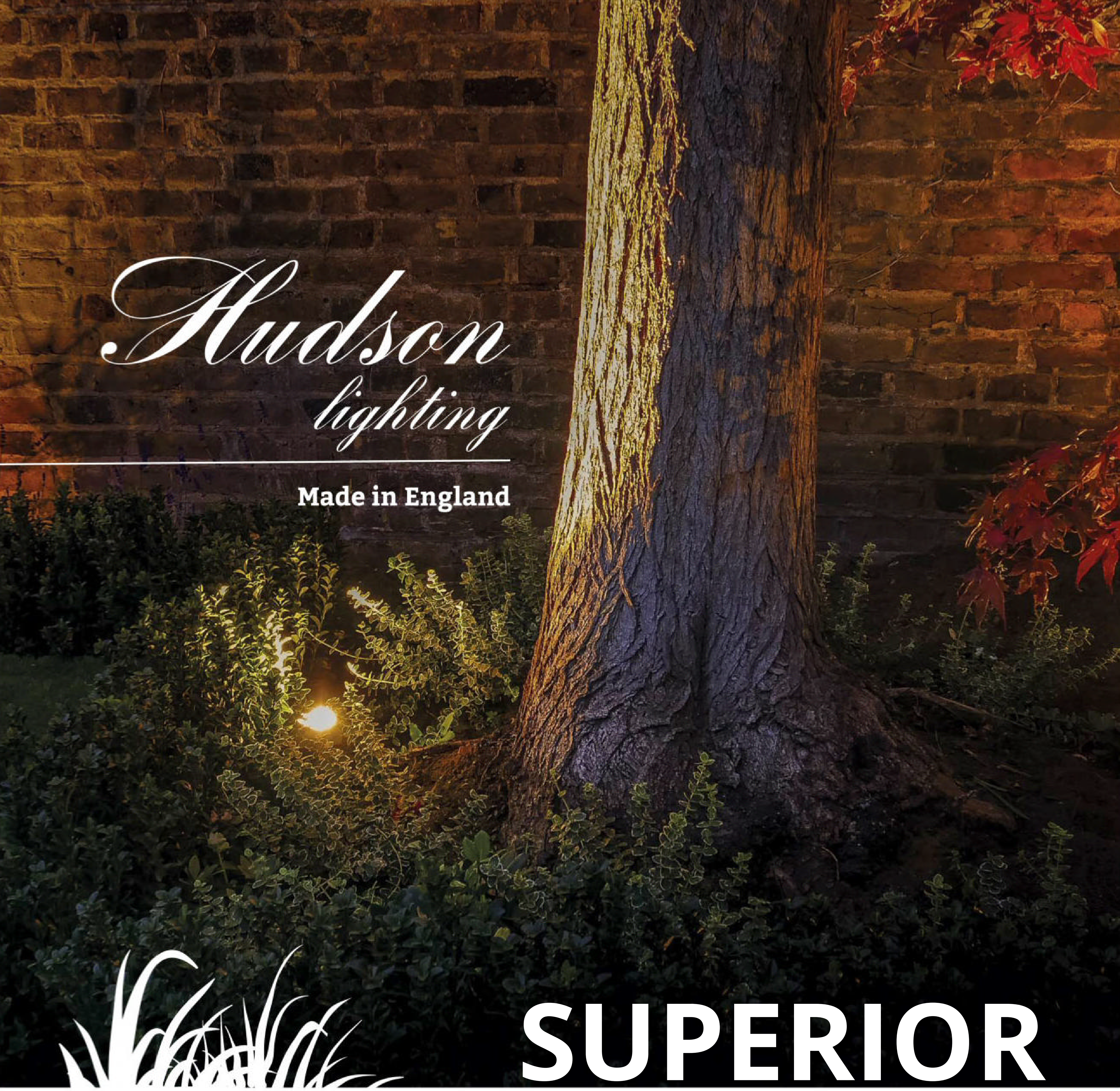
Temple Guiting, Gloucestershire.



Silverstone Farm, Norfolk.

CLAIRE TAKACS; MMG / ANDREW LAWSON, DESIGN JINNY BLOM; MARCUS HARPUR / GAP PHOTOS, DESIGN: GEORGE CARTER



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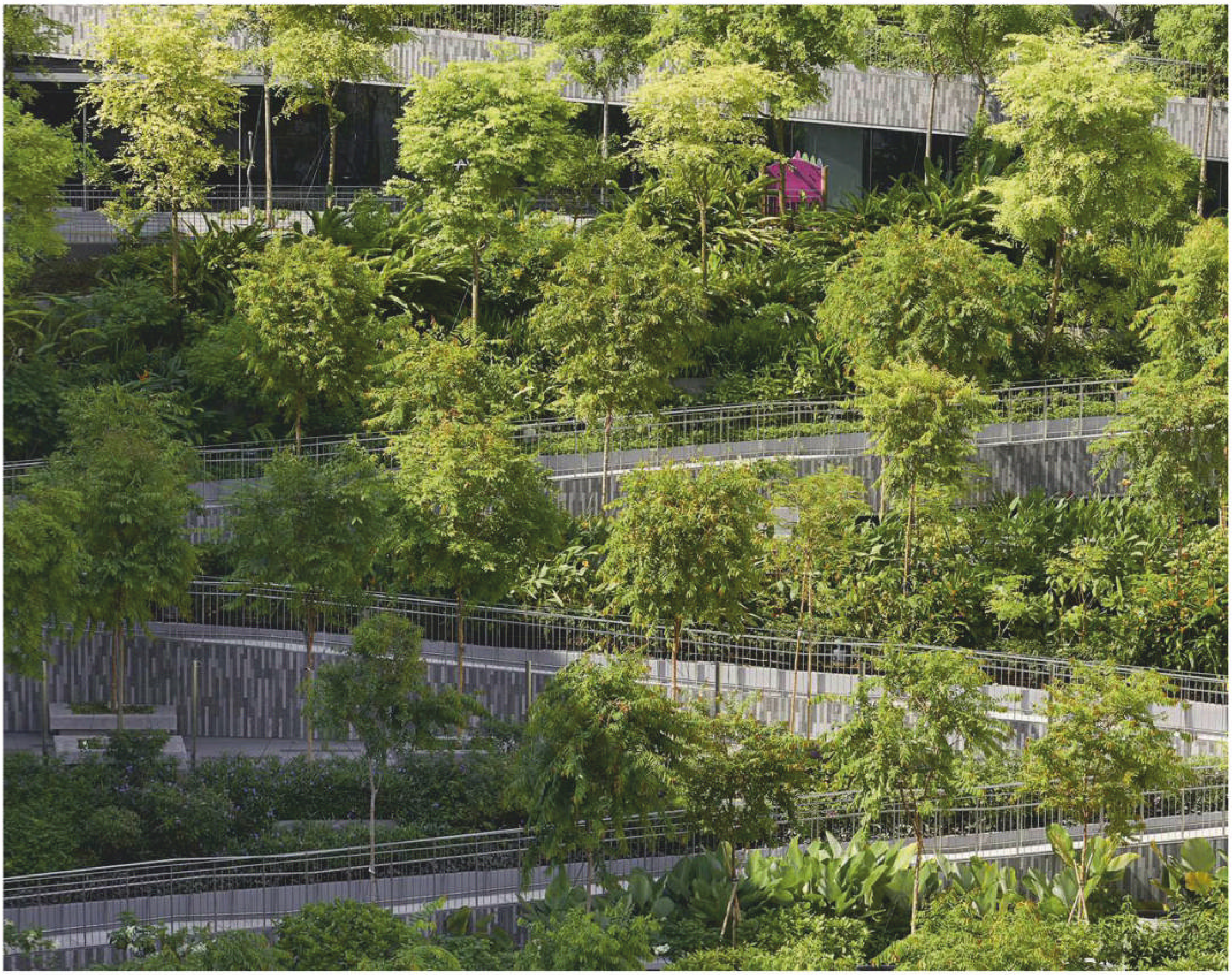
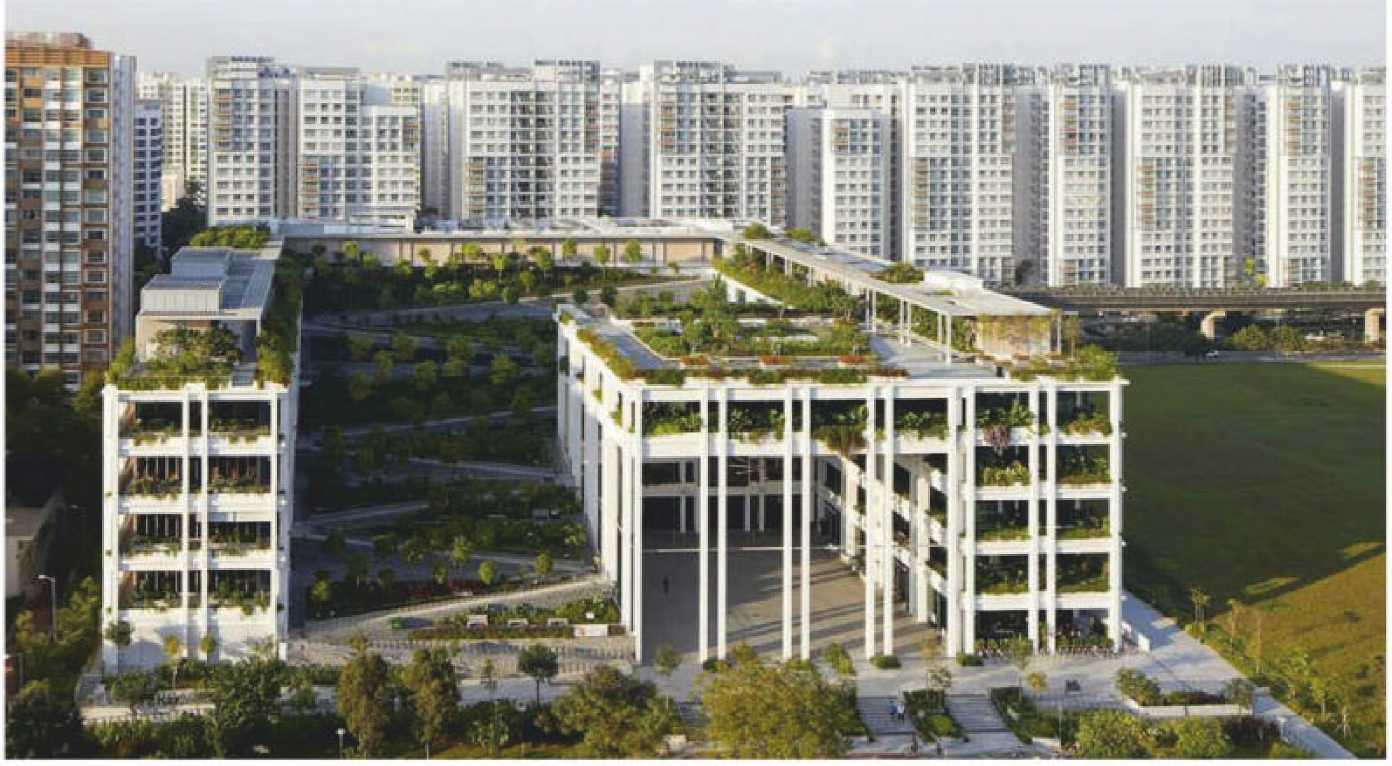




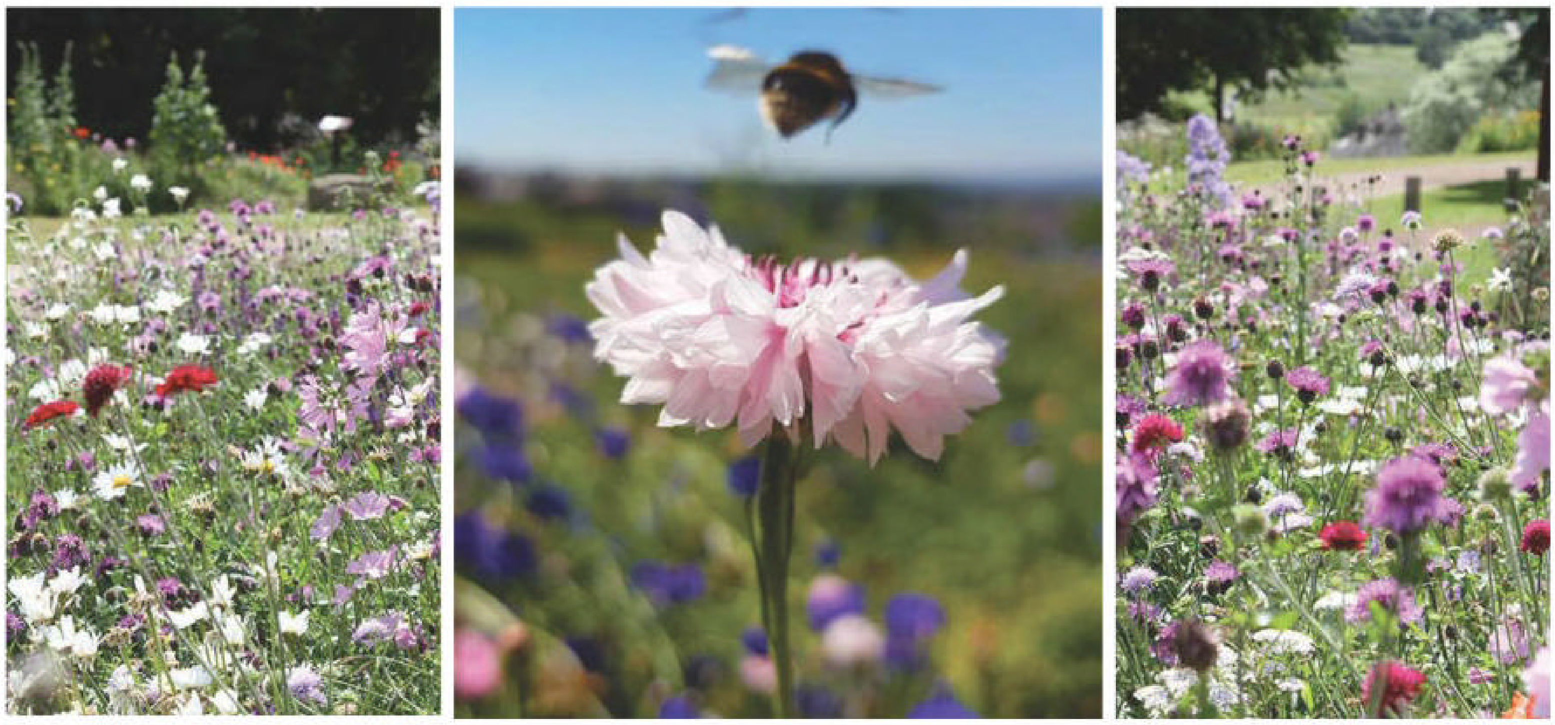
HUFTON + CROW

HEALTHY OUTLOOK

Lushly planted terraced gardens are at the heart of a new community centre and health clinic complex overlooking a canal in Singapore. Designed for Singapore's Housing and Development Board, by London-based Serie Architects with Singapore practice Multiply Architects the building's open façades lend a sense of openness to the complex. Some of the internal spaces, such as the restaurant and the clinic waiting rooms, connect directly with the garden terraces while a large, sheltered plaza at the front of the building serves as a community area. Planting on the veranda creates an environmental filter and rooftop planting includes beds used for growing vegetables. **serie.co.uk**

Bee inspired

Not only are Pictorial Meadows' vibrant seed mixes beautiful, but they also help support and protect our wildlife, including all-important pollinators



The uplifting sight of wildflowers in bloom is certainly one to behold, but a Pictorial Meadow is particularly spectacular, colourful and long-lasting. That's because beautiful species from around the world are combined in creative ways with more familiar native species in its seed mixes and PMturf. It's this clever combination that also helps protect endangered British wildlife such as bees, butterflies, hoverflies and many other insects.

Over the last 20 years, Pictorial Meadows has done a lot of research into pollinators and how it can develop and build meadow mixes to best support biodiversity around the UK. The key to healthy pollinators, it found, is to have abundant and varied flower forms with high pollen and nectar content availability for as long a period as possible, which a mixture of native and non-native species provides. The flowering period of many British native species can last just a few weeks each year. Before that period starts and after it ends, non-native species really come into their own, offering continued resources for pollinators and other wildlife.

Non-native species are sourced from around the world by Pictorial Meadows' intrepid plant hunters. Before they are used in the meadow mixes they go through a careful and methodical review programme to ensure they're non-invasive and will bring multiple benefits to both people and wildlife.

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Pictorial Meadows

TO FIND OUT MORE OR REQUEST A CATALOGUE, GO TO **PICTORIALMEADOWS.CO.UK** OR CALL **0114 267 7635**

NEWS

COMPILED BY **ANNIE GATTI**

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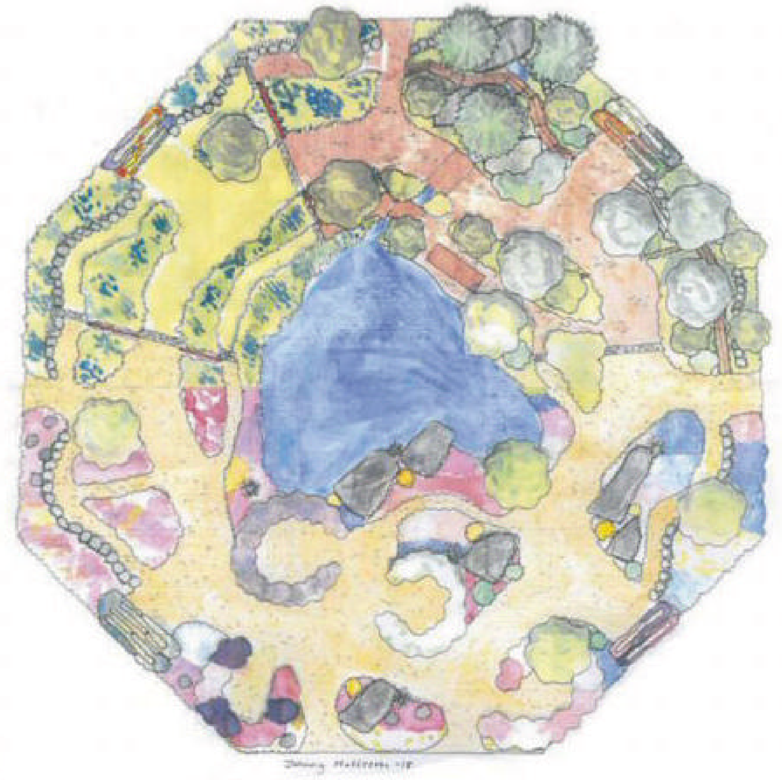

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MARIE-LOUISE AGIUS, JOHNNY MATTSSON, GIULIA BALDIN, CLAUDE CORMIER ET ASSOCIÉS

① CENTENARY GARDEN

There's a first chance to visit Marie-Louise Agius's Centenary Garden this month when Exbury Gardens in Hampshire open for the season. Created in 2017, Marie-Louise's contemporary garden has been designed with a particular focus on late-flowering summer perennials with the existing yew hedging providing an evergreen backdrop. At the back of the garden cloud-pruned evergreen azaleas frame a curved timber bench. The Exbury Gardens are renowned for the spectacular spring display from rhododendrons and azaleas planted by the designer's great-grandfather Lionel de Rothschild. **exbury.co.uk**

② NORDIC PLAN

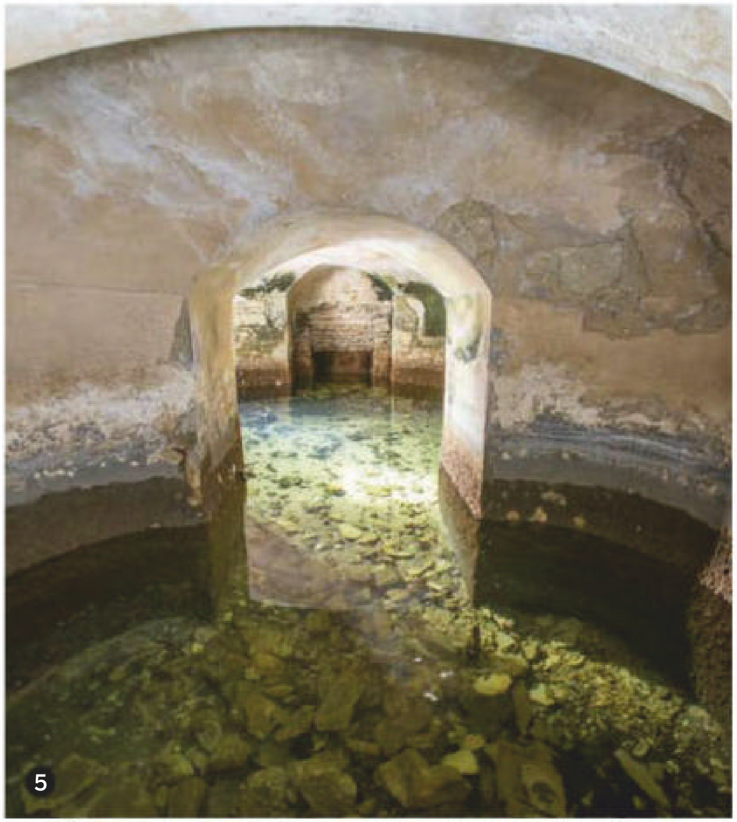
Plans have been drawn up for a garden inspired by the landscape of western Sweden in an area of Saltwell Park in Gateshead. The octagonal garden, which has been designed by Swedish designers Johnny Mattsson, Maria Westeborn and Peter Svenson, features a coastal landscape, a meadow area, woodland area and a cottage garden, and will use a number of Swedish heritage plants. The project is a collaboration between Trädgårdsresan, the Swedish open garden scheme and the northeast organisers of the UK's National Garden Scheme. It follows the installation in 2017 of a classic English garden near Gothenburg, designed by Susie White. **ngs.org.uk**

③ RADICEPURA GARDEN FESTIVAL

Reproductive Gardens is the theme for the second edition of the biennial Radicepura Garden Festival in Giarre, Sicily. The festival, which this year runs for six months, will feature gardens by Andy Sturgeon and Antonio Perazzi and showcase designs from ten young designers from Italy, Spain, France and the UK. Italian designer Giulia Baldin has created a garden for wellbeing (shown), featuring species used in aromatherapy, while Spanish duo Rebeca Nuevo Mayàn and Adrian Esperon's linear garden explores the cultivation of vines, from first seeds to grapes. 27 April – 27 October. **radicepurafestival.com**

④ DESIGN COMPETITION

The winning designs from an international competition to design two new parks for Toronto's waterfront have been revealed. Love Park (shown), designed by Montreal-based Claude Cormier et Associés was chosen for the York Street Park. The design, which has a central water feature framed by lush planting, also offers opportunities for exhibiting public art. The second winning design, called Rees Ridge, by New York practice wHY Architecture and Brook McIlroy (Toronto), is for Rees Street Park on which construction is expected to begin in 2020. **waterfrontoronto.ca**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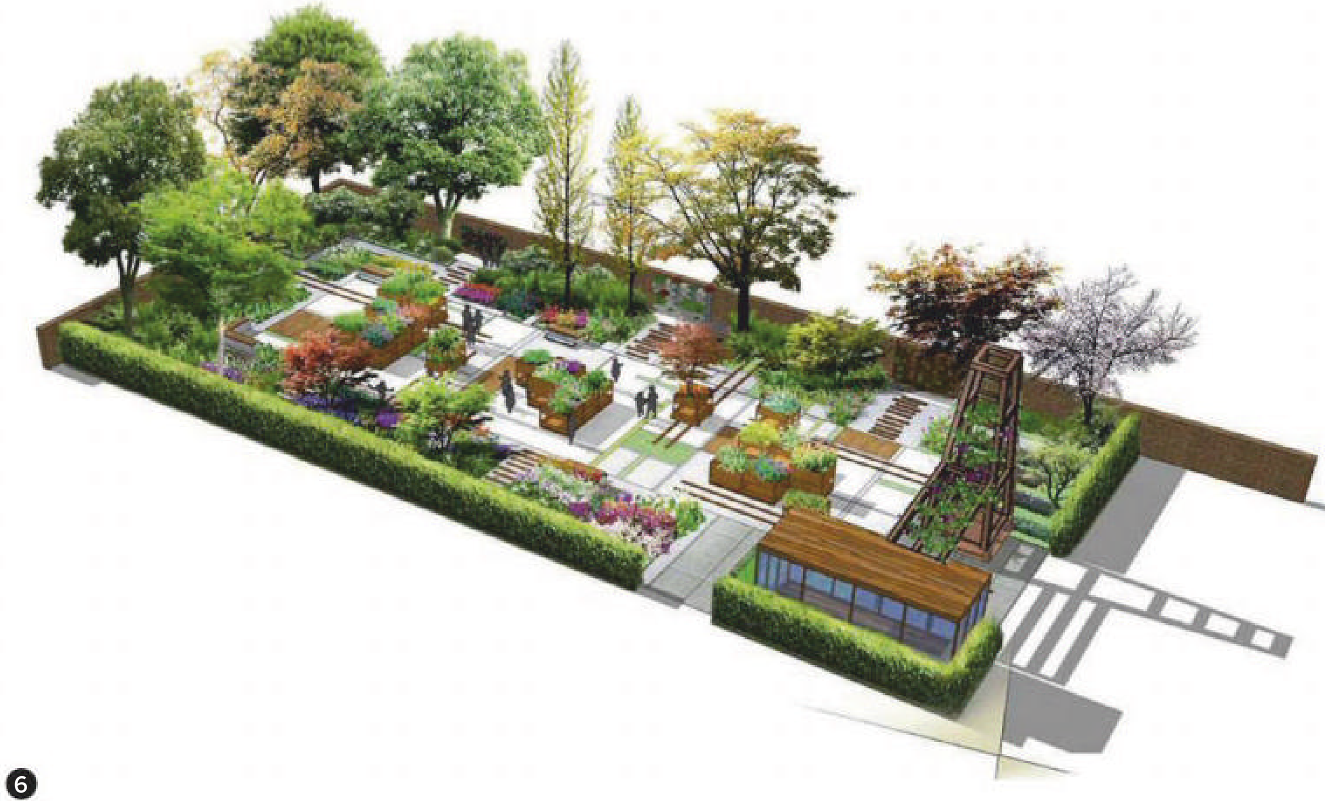
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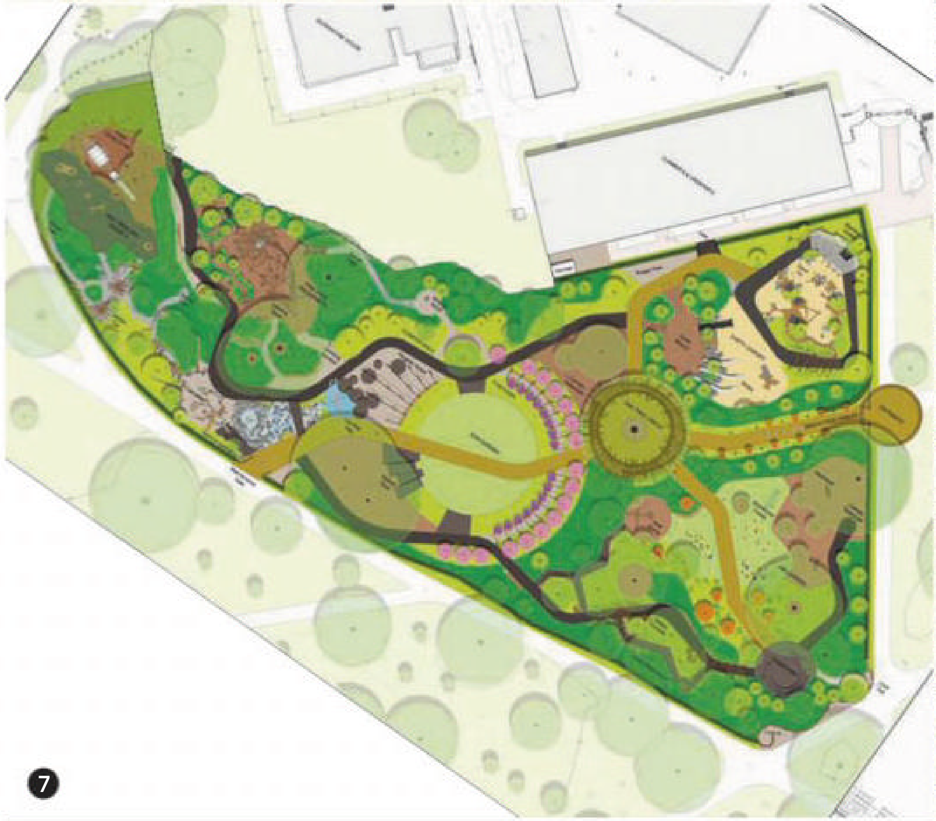
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⑤ ROOMS REVEALED

Dredging of the Queen Pool at Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire, has revealed some 30 rooms on the submerged ground floor of the Grand Bridge. The bridge, designed by Sir John Vanbrugh for the 1st Duke of Malborough in 1708, originally contained 33 rooms, one large enough to be a ballroom. Later 'Capability' Brown flooded the lower rooms to create the lakes and the view over the bridge to the palace, but decades of silting, meant water levels had dropped and the famous view was in danger of disappearing. The dredging was a test run for the main dredging work due to take place in 2020 ahead of restoration work on the bridge. **blenheimpalace.com**

⑥ STUDENT PRIZE

Two landscape architect students from Manchester Metropolitan University have won a nationwide competition to design a Learning Garden at RHS Bridgewater. Stella Yang and Karsan Karavadra's modular design will be sited inside the 11-acre Weston Walled Garden alongside the kitchen garden being designed by the Harris Bugg practice. Designed in a post-industrial style, it uses features, such as an eco chimney that will be used to grow climbers and house bird and bat boxes, a greenhouse where exotic plants can be grown, and a test area where students of all ages can experiment with plants. **rhs.org.uk**

⑦ ELEMENTAL FUN

A new Children's Garden is to open at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in May. Designed by Suzie Jewell, it is made up of a series of areas that allow children to explore the elements plants need to grow, Children enter through a tunnel of star jasmine to a 200-year-old oak tree surrounded by an aerial walkway. Bamboos surround a play hut village in the Earth Garden while oversized spheres represent grains of pollen in the Air Garden. The Sun Garden has a ring of sunflowers, cherry trees and pergolas covered in edible fruits while in the Water Garden, children can control the flow of water using pumps, and cross the space on waterlily stepping stones. **kew.org**

⑧ SGD AWARDS

Dutch garden design was celebrated at the Society of Garden Designers seventh annual award ceremony last month with Piet Oudolf being given a Lifetime Award and the Dutch designer Noël van Mierlo picking up the International Award, for a contemporary Japanese garden, Other prizes included the Large Residential Garden Award, presented jointly to Marian Boswall for Reighton Wood in Kent, a garden that echoes the rolling countryside, and Robert Myers for The Walled Garden in Buckinghamshire (shown), which features an infinity-edged pool in one half and a fruit, vegetable and cut flower garden in the other. **sgdawards.com**

KARSAN KARAVADRA AND STELLA YANG, ALEX RAMSAY

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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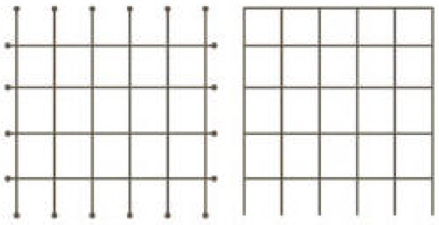

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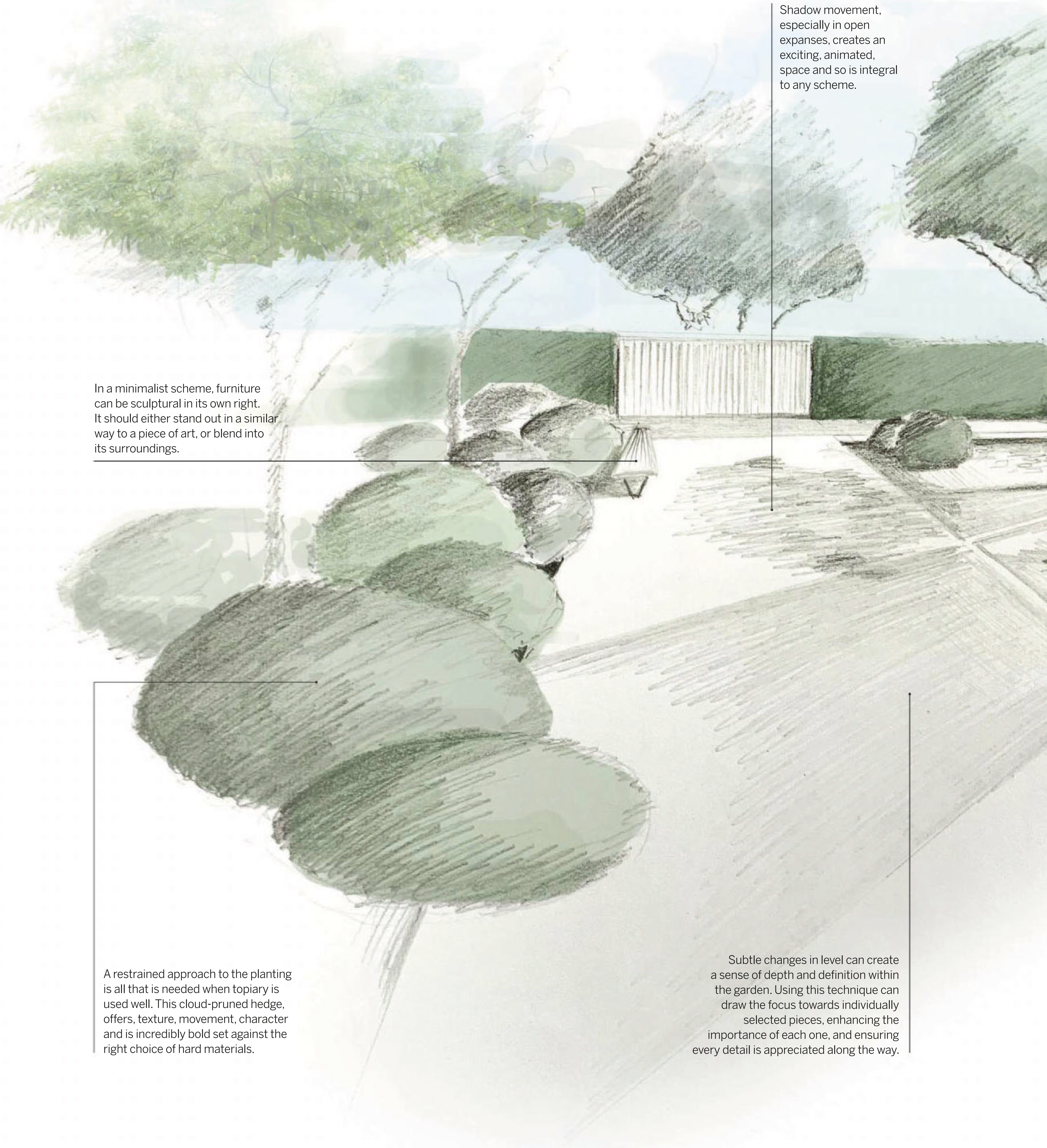
BACK TO BASICS

If the thought of a minimalist garden conjures up a sterile, unwelcoming space, think again. A restrained design is key to appreciating the subtlety in every detail

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION MATT KEIGHTLEY



Shadow movement, especially in open expanses, creates an exciting, animated, space and so is integral to any scheme.

In a minimalist scheme, furniture can be sculptural in its own right. It should either stand out in a similar way to a piece of art, or blend into its surroundings.

A restrained approach to the planting is all that is needed when topiary is used well. This cloud-pruned hedge, offers, texture, movement, character and is incredibly bold set against the right choice of hard materials.

Subtle changes in level can create a sense of depth and definition within the garden. Using this technique can draw the focus towards individually selected pieces, enhancing the importance of each one, and ensuring every detail is appreciated along the way.

Matt Keightley is an award-winning designer and two-time winner of the People's Choice Award at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. He is head designer at London-based landscaping firm Rosebank.

Only when you peel away the non-essentials can you focus on what is truly important. That is what minimalism means to me. I know some people think minimalist gardens are stark, sterile and unwelcoming, but I see them as the precise opposite. Meticulously planned interfaces and a harmony between hard and soft elements create tranquil, restorative spaces that are seemingly effortless.

For the past 15 years, I have been using my own interpretation of restorative minimalism to create sleek, contemporary gardens that, I hope, don't just look good but make you feel good as well. These days it is so easy to be overwhelmed by 'stuff' in every aspect of our lives that I think there is something positively liberating about taking the time to consider the importance of each and every decision and detail.

MINIMAL INTERVENTION

I have been inspired by the works of such great minimalists as Christopher Bradley Hole, who uses clever planting and deceptively simple form in a way that brings minimalism bang up to date. I also admire the work of the late Dutch designer Jacques Wirtz, who relied on topiary, hedges and lawns for many of the design elements in his gardens. Wirtz shows that you can make a really crisp contemporary garden without expensive hard landscaping, which is good news for amateurs. You can make the boldest of statements with the most restrained of palettes, and that's what excites me.

But I strongly believe that minimalism is also rooted in tradition. I have been greatly influenced by Japanese garden design – especially those ancient temple gardens that bring together a small number of elements to evoke a serene and spiritual atmosphere. At the moment I am working on a 100-year-old, privately owned Japanese landscape in Hertfordshire. It's regarded as one of the finest examples of the style in Europe and it gives me a feeling I can't quite explain, but that everything is just 'right'. When every detail is perfect the result is a garden that is as comforting to look at as it is to walk through. For me that is what lies at the heart of minimalism.

FEATURES THAT BLOCK OR FILTER VIEWS MAKE PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL THROUGH THE SPACE

MODERN LIVING

As an ethos, it certainly suits the move towards mindfulness and conscious consumerism, and it also lends itself very well to current trends in contemporary architecture. Minimalist garden design is an expression of the relationship between a house and its adjoining outdoor space. Very often this will be a grid based on key referencing points of the architecture – in particular doors and windows – significant trees and other focal points or features of the wider landscape. This is highly effective when designing a garden around a modern building, but it can also work really well when a contemporary extension is added to a period property.

The key to success is mastering the balance between mass and void – the interplay between three-dimensional objects and the two-dimensional elements around them. Open space is important, but you need to balance it with your trees and other planting or the whole thing does risk becoming stark and unwelcoming. The appropriate ratio of one to the other will depend on how you want to use your garden – if you have a hoard of football-playing kids or entertain outdoors on a grand scale you will need a fair bit of open

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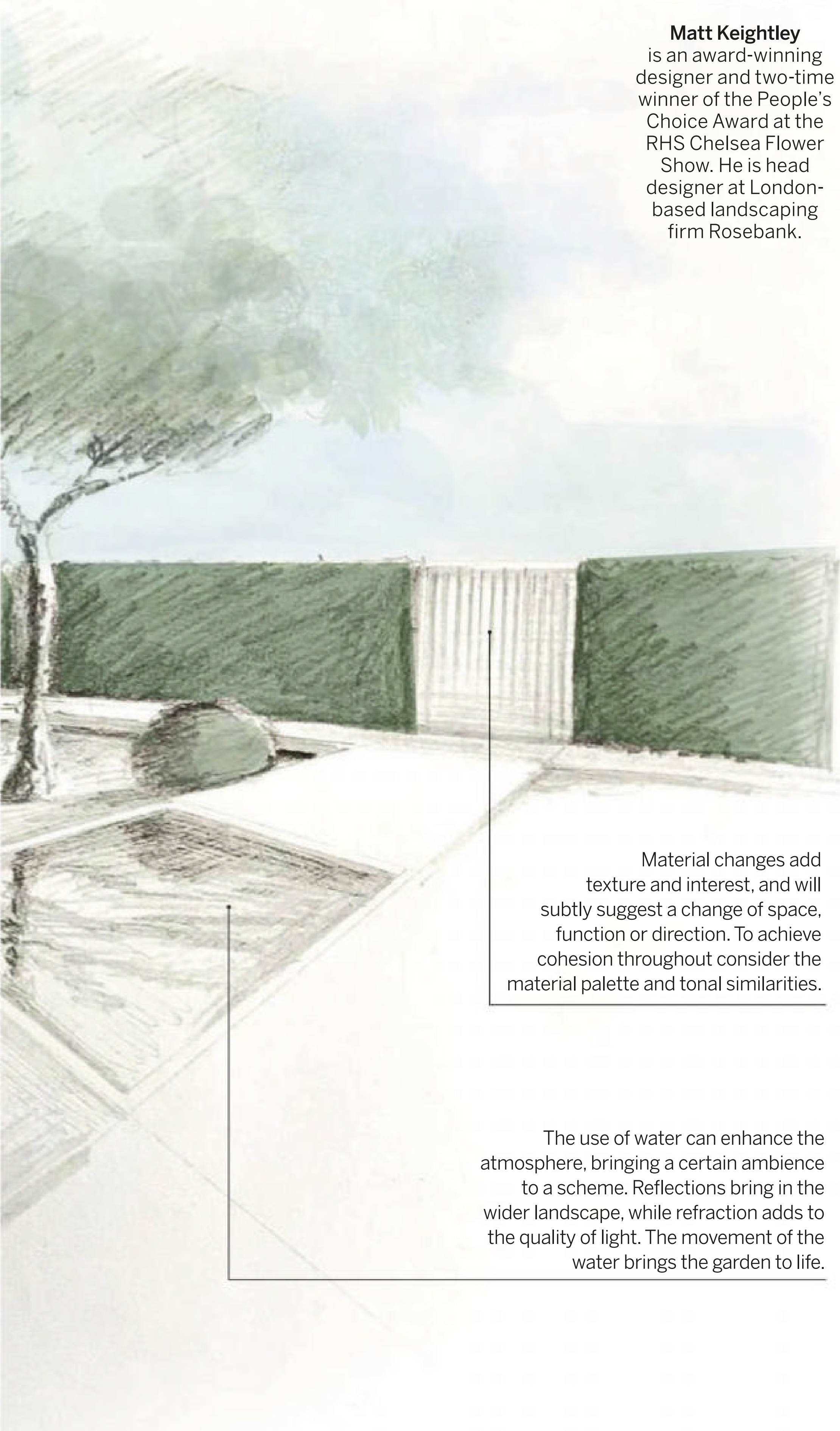

Material changes add texture and interest, and will subtly suggest a change of space, function or direction. To achieve cohesion throughout consider the material palette and tonal similarities.

The use of water can enhance the atmosphere, bringing a certain ambience to a scheme. Reflections bring in the wider landscape, while refraction adds to the quality of light. The movement of the water brings the garden to life.

Striking the right balance between mass and void is key, and creating an exaggerated void can look incredible. An open space provides effortless serenity to a garden; it slows the pace, encouraging visitors to take a relaxing meander, that ensures every detail is appreciated along the way.

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▷ space – but you still don't want to see the whole plot at once. Put in features that block or filter views down the garden and you make people want to travel through the space, and if you can't see the whole garden in one hit it increases the sense of scale and mystery.

You can also manipulate the balance between mass and void by changes in level. Even a 30cm step can have an impact on the space. It is something I try to do in every garden I design. When there is no natural slope to the ground, I might dig down in one area to create a slightly sunken level. Sometimes it is enough to bank the soil up in certain areas within the beds. It all helps give definition to different areas of the garden.

BALANCED VIEWS

If you are worried about getting the balance right, try using photographic overlays. It's a great technique that I use a lot. Get a picture of your garden and cut out paper shapes to represent the large elements you are thinking of introducing. So, if you are considering planting five trees, cut out five ovals and place them on your picture. Then move them around. Take one or two away. Is every element really working to its optimum potential? Even now I usually start out with too much then gradually cut back, bit by bit.

Begin with a few, well-chosen trees, then build up the planting around them. You don't want low groundcover with a tree shooting up in the middle. Instead choose complementary plants that step up in height, building towards the tree and anchoring it into the design. This establishes a significant plant mass to balance out the surrounding void spaces, whether that be lawn or some sort of hard surface.

With your structure in place, it is time to think about adding interest. Even just by playing with light and shadow you can totally mesmerise people, introducing atmosphere, intrigue and, actually, an enhanced sense of mass and void. I use a great app called SunCalc, which plots the arc of the sun across a garden and is very helpful when considering where a shadow might fall to decorative effect in an otherwise bare area.

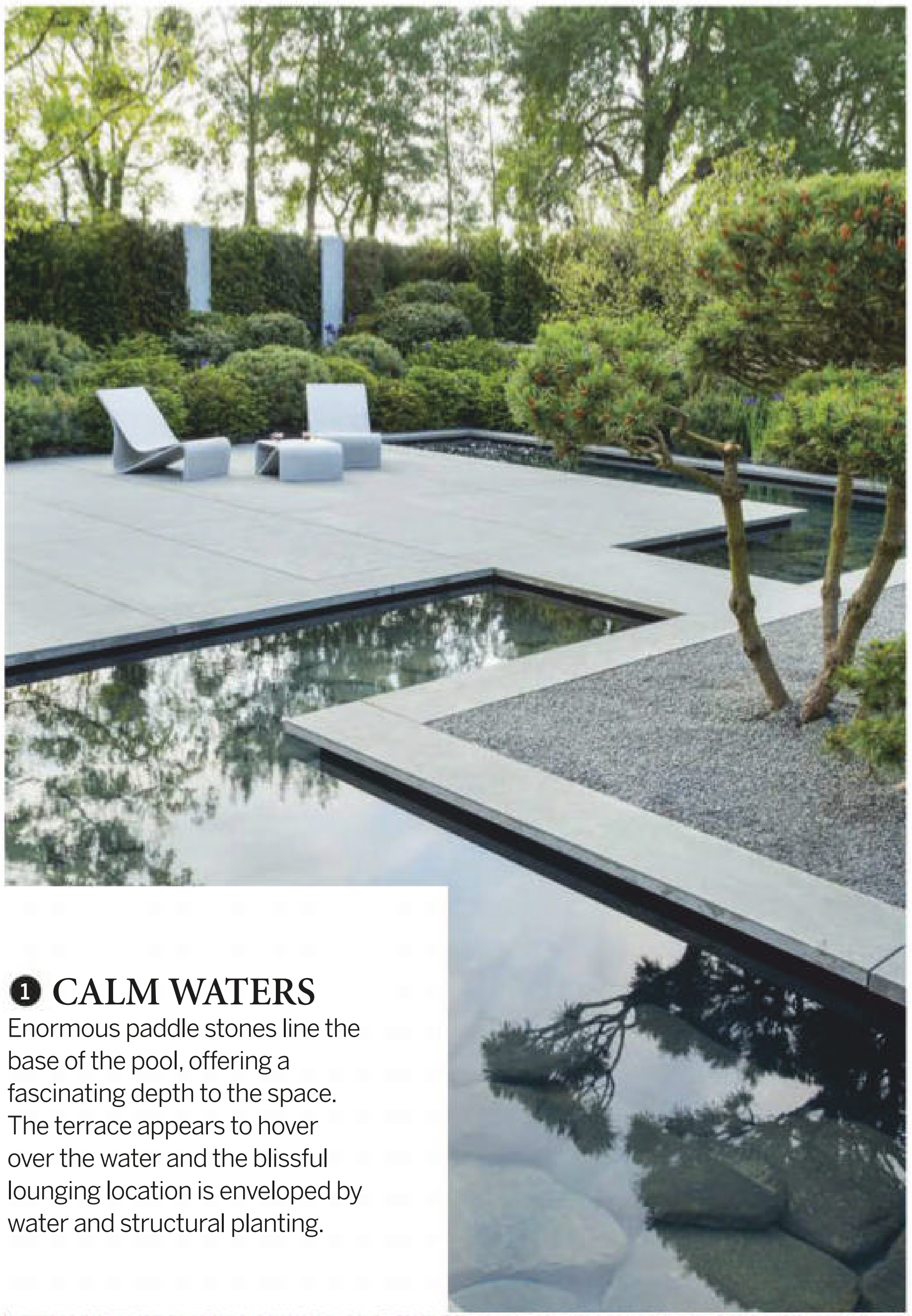
> **ONLY WHEN ALL THE OTHER PIECES ARE IN PLACE DO I START TO LAYER ON THE COLOUR**

COLOURING IN

Water will enhance the impact of light and shade and brings in other elements as well. I use it both for the sound of its movement and for its reflective qualities. Even a pool or narrow channel, which on paper might look simple, can in reality be dynamic.

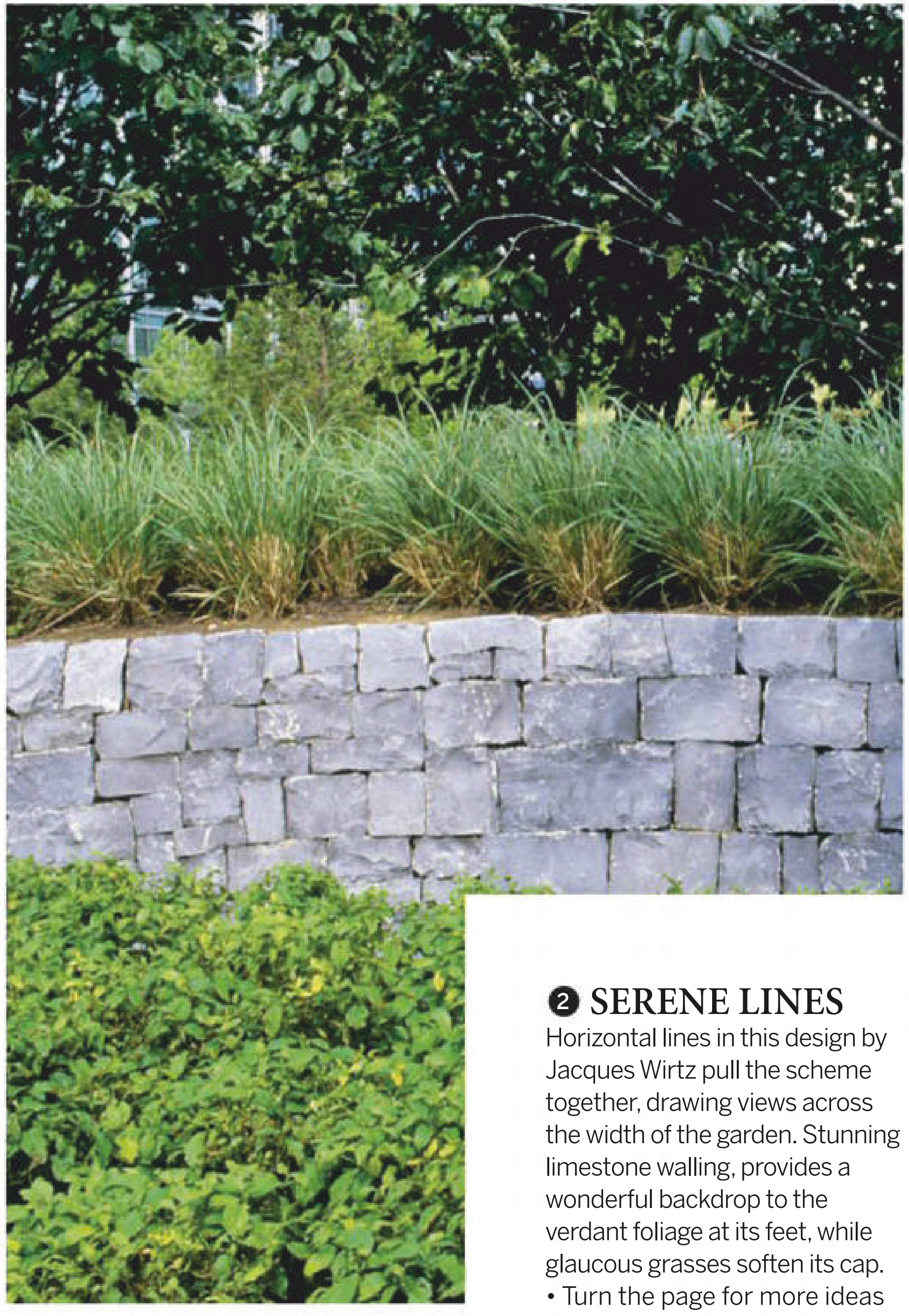
Only when all these other pieces are in place do I start to layer on the colour, working with restraint to build up a tonal palette that covers both the hard and soft landscaping elements. I choose harmonious materials so that, although they are not all the same, they do share similarities of texture or tone. Against this backdrop, I develop a planting plan based on swathes and repetition chosen to complement the hard landscape. Sometimes I'll achieve this by working with a very tightly edited list of just a few different plants. In other gardens the planting might be more expansive, but then I will concentrate on differences in texture while sticking to a single colour theme.

It's about appreciating the subtlety in every detail and taking bold decisions to produce a restrained design. I'm aiming for harmony in everything that I do and I suppose that is what makes me a minimalist. ❑



❶ CALM WATERS

Enormous paddle stones line the base of the pool, offering a fascinating depth to the space. The terrace appears to hover over the water and the blissful lounging location is enveloped by water and structural planting.

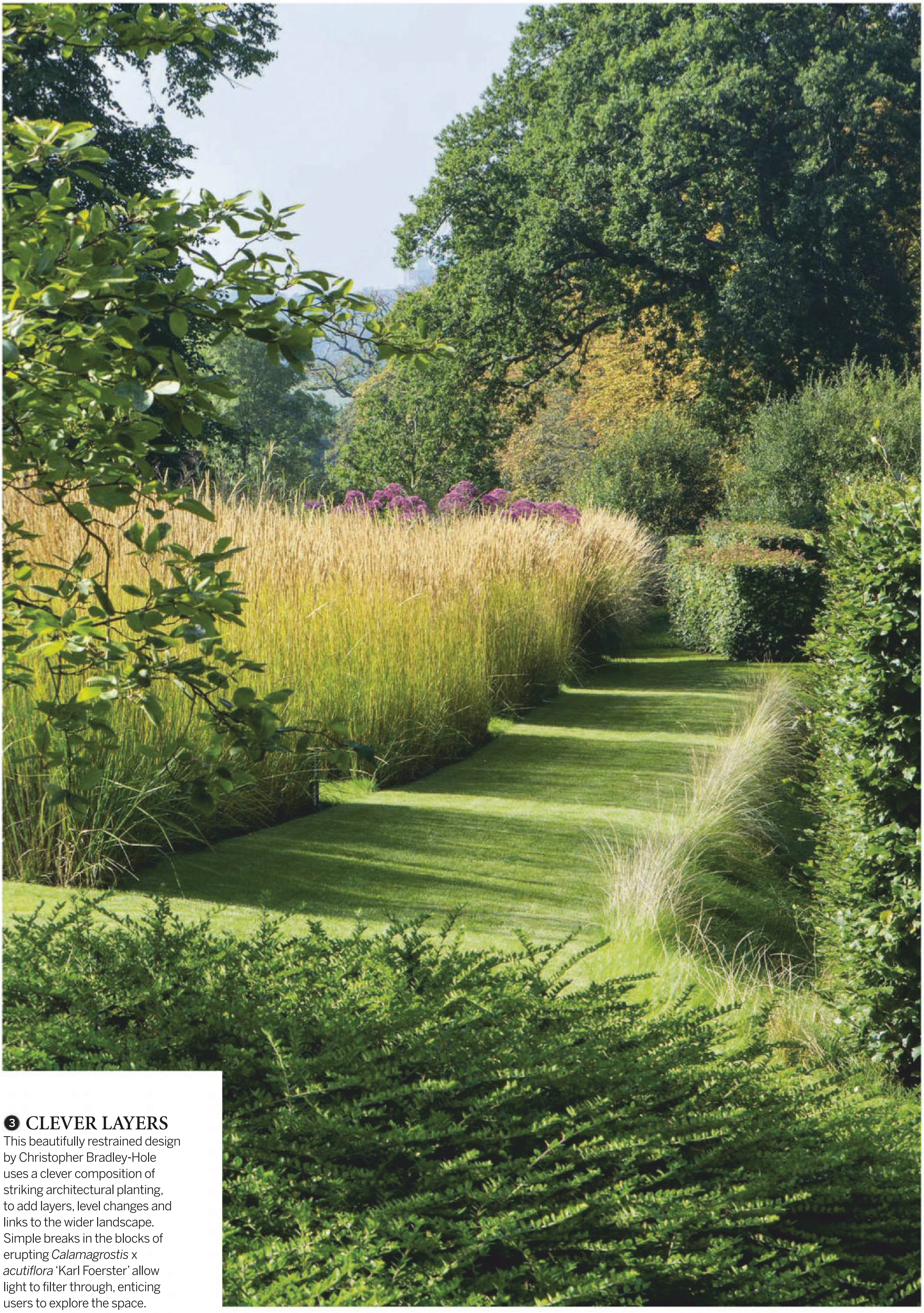


❷ SERENE LINES

Horizontal lines in this design by Jacques Wirtz pull the scheme together, drawing views across the width of the garden. Stunning limestone walling, provides a wonderful backdrop to the verdant foliage at its feet, while glaucous grasses soften its cap.

• Turn the page for more ideas

1 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN MATT KEIGHTLEY; 2 MARIANNE MAJERUS, JUBILEE PARK, LONDON, DESIGN JACQUES WIRTZ.



❸ CLEVER LAYERS
This beautifully restrained design by Christopher Bradley-Hole uses a clever composition of striking architectural planting, to add layers, level changes and links to the wider landscape. Simple breaks in the blocks of erupting *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' allow light to filter through, enticing users to explore the space.

3 MARIANNE MAJERUS, DESIGN CHRISTOPHER BRADLEY-HOLE

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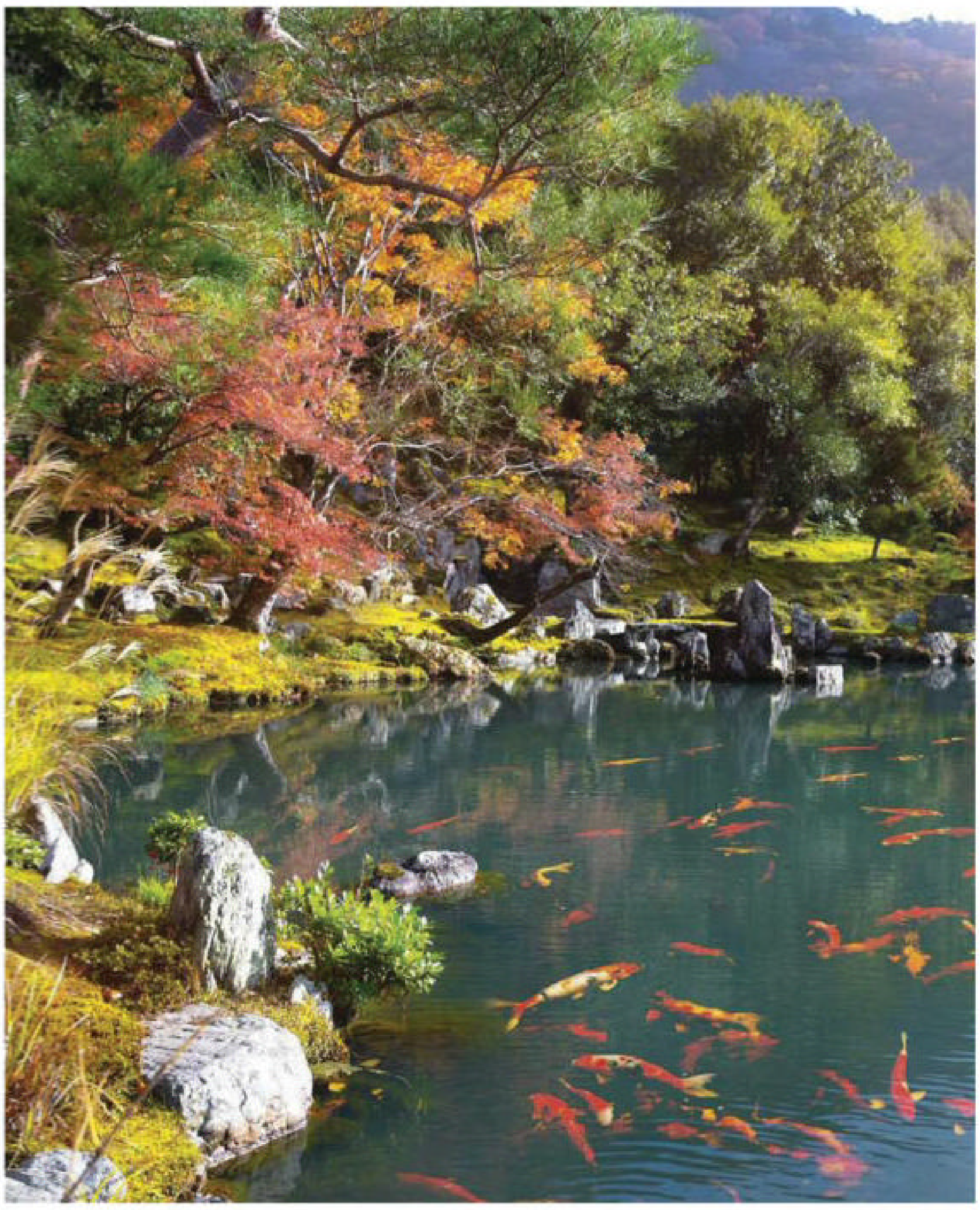

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Garden hoes

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FOR TIGHT CORNERS
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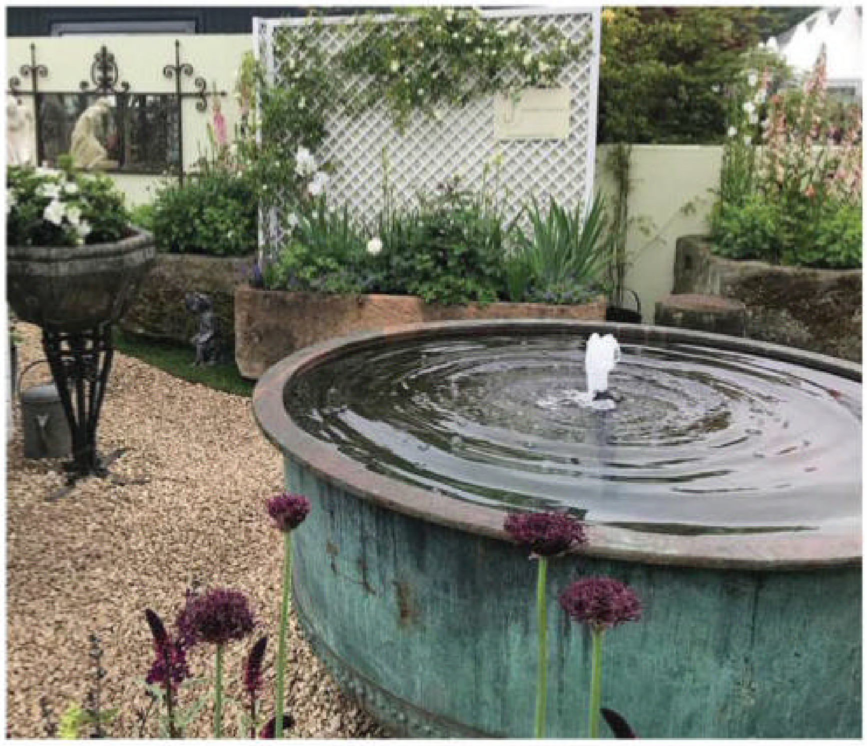

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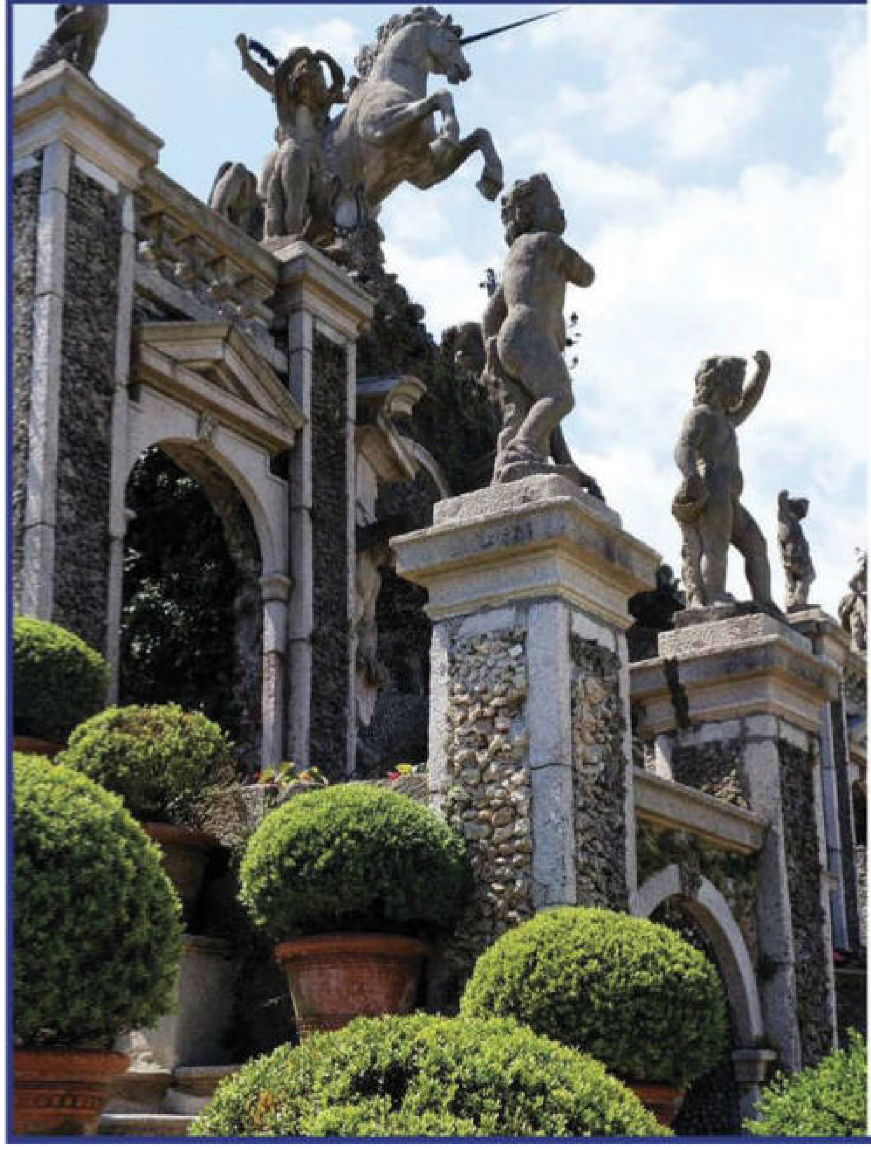

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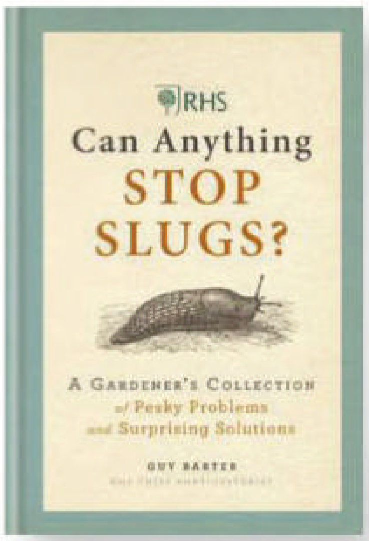
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, crossword, back issues, plant hardiness, reader offer

Annuals, such as this *Centaurea cyanus*, *Ammi majus* and *Salvia viridis*, are among Clare Foster's recommendations for flowers to grow from seed in *The Flower Garden*, reviewed on page 104.

SABINA RUBER

BOOK REVIEWS



RHS CAN ANYTHING STOP SLUGS? A GARDENER'S COLLECTION OF PESKY PROBLEMS AND SURPRISING SOLUTIONS
by Guy Barter

Octopus Books, £14.99
ISBN 978-1784724788

A page-turning collection of useful facts and solutions that will help anyone overcome problems they are facing in the garden.

Reviewer Joshua Sparkes is head gardener at Forde Abbey.

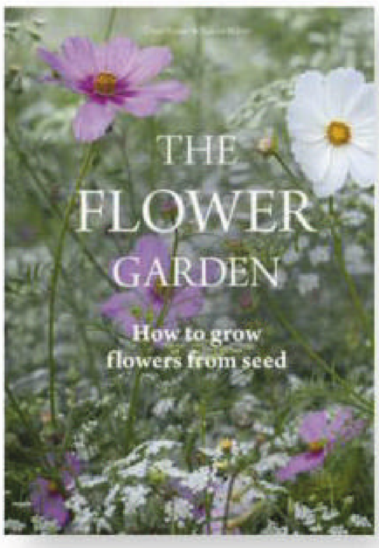
Can anything stop slugs? A question generally found on the lips of every gardener. Thankfully Guy Barter, chief horticulturist from the RHS has given us the answer along with many other common, and not so common, gardening conundrums. The book is jam packed with useful tips and tricks, and split into five horticultural subjects from Edible Plants to Garden Care.

Each dilemma is posed as a question, such as 'Can I second guess a squirrel?' (my favourite) or 'What's making holes in my potatoes?', and covering topics from hedging to the benefits of woodlice, each accompanied with delightful photos or charming illustrations.

What is refreshing is that the book offers a direct answer for a quick no-nonsense outcome but also goes into detail about other alternative methods, offering the reader a broader approach to choose what suits them best.

The book is also filled with a host of interesting facts and stories on topics that come as a great surprise as you scroll through, such as ways to speed up composting or stories about seeds in Siberian tombs germinating after 32,000 years, I found these snippets to be useful and fascinating.

Can Anything Stop Slugs? is a marvellous collection of solutions and suits anyone who has started, or is about to start, the horticultural adventure. The book balances traditional advice along with up-to-date methods and attitudes, focussing on the most holistic or ecological approach where possible. Take the title topic, for example, instead of the rudimental and clumsy solution of pellets, the author suggests building a healthy eco system and provide habitats to welcome the slugs' predators. A welcome addition to any book shelf for anyone looking to expand their garden knowledge.



THE FLOWER GARDEN: HOW TO GROW FLOWERS FROM SEED
by Clare Foster, photography by Sabina Rüber

Laurence King, £19.99
ISBN 978-1786274090

A sophisticated and indulgent guide to growing flowers from seed, with beautiful photography that makes each and every flower sing.

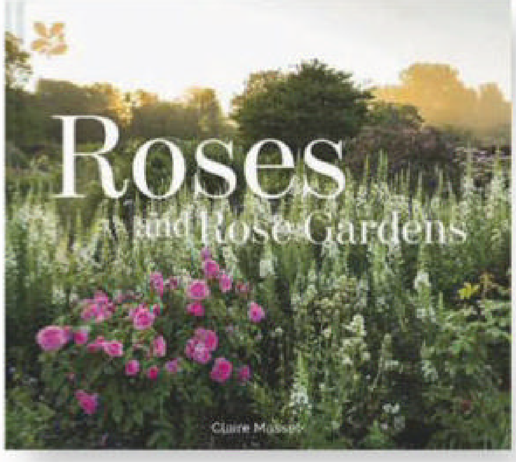
Reviewer Sorrel Everton is deputy editor for Gardens Illustrated.

I happened to open this book the weekend the garden was covered in snow. What better time to plan than when confronted with (almost literally) a blank canvas? There's the garden, ready to be divided up, filled in and coloured. *The Flower Garden* is just the book to set the plant-loving heart a flutter with seed sowing time upon us. Clare Foster is garden editor at *House & Garden*, and in 2012 she set herself, together with friend and photographer Sabina Rüber, the challenge to grow as many annual flowers from seed as they could. The book is a distillation of their findings and successes, listing 57 gorgeous plants to grow cheaply and easily from seed.

The bulk of the book reads like a very sophisticated seed catalogue brought to life with Rüber's enticing images. Divided into chapters to help you select the plant you want for a particular use or location, such as Cottage Garden Favourites, Filigree Fillers and Sweetly Scented, each entry has details of how to sow and grow, along with species and cultivar recommendations. There is temptation on every page; my seed order list got longer the more I browsed.

The second half of the book is a practical guide with useful how-to information on the techniques and practicalities of growing from seed, equipment needed and common problems. The book finishes with ideas on how to use your flowers, be they as cut-vase displays, container combinations or clambering over a wonderfully rustic, coppiced hazel arch.

For experienced growers this is the most stylish of style guides that invites experimentation and new discoveries. For a novice gardener it anticipates and encourages the delight to be found in sowing a tiny seed and nurturing it to fully grown, blooming glory.



ROSES AND ROSE GARDENS

by Claire Masset

National Trust, £14.99
ISBN 978-1911358688

A charming introduction to the world of roses, including an overview of their history, classic gardens to visit, different types and simple care.

Reviewer Rosanna Morris is a freelance writer.

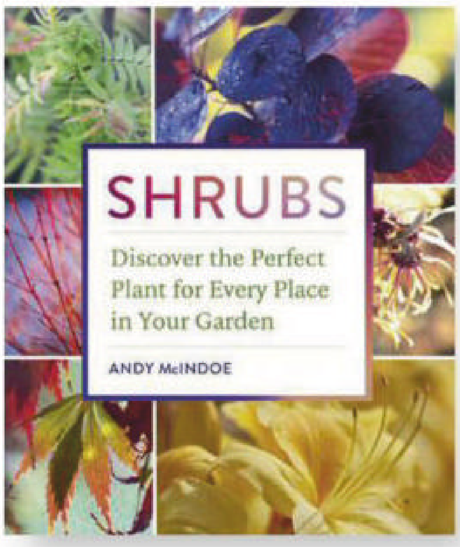
Today there are about 3,000 types of rose commercially available in the UK and 14,000 globally. Author Claire Masset has compiled this book to celebrate what in her words is a true classic – a plant that dates back to time immemorial and has been immune to the whims of fashion throughout the centuries. While the appeal of other plants has peaked and troughed, she says, the rose has remained a constant.

This is a book designed more for beginners than those who already have a knowledgeable relationship with the rose. It is structured into sections on rose history, rose types, UK gardens to visit and simple rose care, interspersed with extracts of poetry and one-page profiles on 20 roses, from the 1881 *Rosa* 'Madame Isaac Péreire' to David Austin's *Rosa* 'Constance Spry'.

Masset whisks us through the history, taking us from the Romans, who grew entire fields of *Rosa gallica*, through Empress Joséphine, who is said to have grown over 250 different cultivars, on to the Victorian obsession and founding of the National Rose Society in 1876, and rose mania in the 1950s.

As it is published by the National Trust, the book features mostly Trust gardens, such as Mottisfont in Hampshire, where plantsman Graham Stuart Thomas dedicated his life to saving old roses from extinction, and Vita Sackville-West's Sissinghurst, but there are other gardens such as Kiftsgate Court (of Kiftsgate rose fame) in Gloucestershire.

Chris Lacey's illustrative close-up portraits of individual roses are helpful as well as beautiful, while his garden landscapes show off their majesty. The book can be a little light on detail and storytelling, especially where some gardens are allocated only a paragraph, but it makes for a concise and accessible introduction to this enduringly beloved flower.



SHRUBS: DISCOVER THE PERFECT PLANT FOR EVERY PLACE IN YOUR GARDEN

by Andy McIndoe

Timber Press, £24.99
ISBN 978-1604697674

A clearly written, accessible and comprehensive description of shrubs with suggestions for plants suitable for every part of the garden.

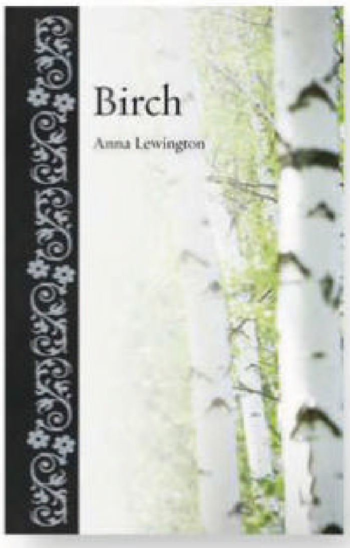
Reviewer John Hoyland is a plantsman and writer.

As Andy McIndoe points out in his new book, there has never been a time when shrubs have been out of fashion. Smaller gardens, though, and a trend towards more herbaceous plantings, have shifted them out of the spotlight. McIndoe is a devoted and knowledgeable ambassador for shrubs. So enthusiastically does the book set out why and how we should be growing more that, by the end of it, I was looking at my own garden with ideas for more shrub planting.

We have all now become familiar with the idea that there is a plant for every situation, and in this book McIndoe clearly sets out what those plants are and describes them in detail. As well as looking at the usual problem conditions, such as shady borders or hot, dry gardens, the book describes, for example, shrubs that will grow on steep banks, in narrow spaces or that can be grown against walls as an alternative to climbers. A large part of the book covers shrubs with desirable characteristics, such as scent or dramatic foliage or those that grow rapidly.

Each shrub is illustrated with one of the author's own photographs and described in detail, including cultivation or pruning requirements. For each group of plants there is a section for what he calls 'plant partners', that is, plants that will grow well in the same situation.

Andy McIndoe is probably best known as the guiding hand, for 25 years, behind Hillier Nurseries' gold-medal winning displays at the Chelsea Flower Show. His book is informed by a lifetime of growing and selecting shrubs. His advice is clear, practical and honest: the sort of counsel every gardener needs. The book will be an invaluable addition not only to the bookcases of gardeners but also those of gardener designers seeking to broaden their plant palette.



BIRCH
by Anna Lewington

Reaktion Books, £16
ISBN 978-1789140118

The latest in the fascinating Reaktion botanical series is a comprehensive, entertaining homage to one of the UK's most recognisable trees.

Reviewer Alys Hurn is staff writer for Gardens Illustrated.

Birch, it seems, is a pioneer among trees. In the wild, they have ventured across multiple terrains from industrial wastelands to freezing tundra, claiming any patch of soil that's free for the taking.

This indomitable will for survival, as well as the tree's usability as a material, and influence on global culture and traditions is thoroughly documented in *Birch*, the latest edition to Reaktion's ever-growing botanical series.

Written by ethnobotanist Anna Lewington, the book is organised into six dense chapters: The Natural History of Birches, Tree of Well-being, Practical Birch, Sacred Birch, Images of Birch and the Future of Birch. There are interesting illustrations throughout and at the back you'll find a birch timeline and useful references and direction for further reading.

Intriguing facts form the basis of the book and although the structure of each chapter is haphazard at times; moving quickly from one reference to another, and back again, Lewington's tone is light and entertaining so the breadth of information covered never gets tiresome.

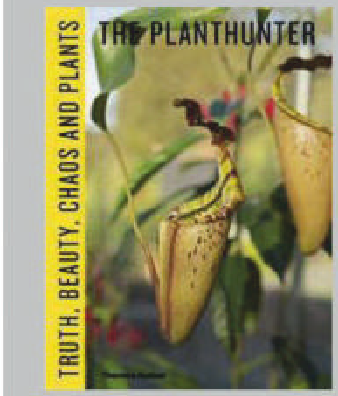
Two uses for birch trees fascinated me. First was birch tapping, the act of harvesting birch sap. It's praised for its health benefits and the sap can be drunk fresh with lemon juice. In some parts of Scotland, traditional birch tapping has started up again.

Second, the restriction on aluminium during the Second World War resulted in birch being used as the main construction material to make the H-4 Hercules, inaccurately known as the 'Spruce Goose', the largest flying boat ever built.

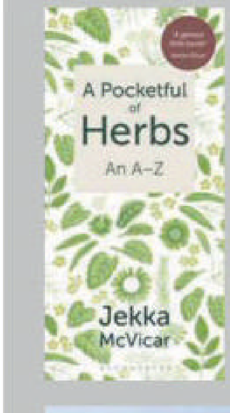
Whether you're a fan of the birch tree or not there is a wealth of information to be gleaned from reading *Birch*.

Other books

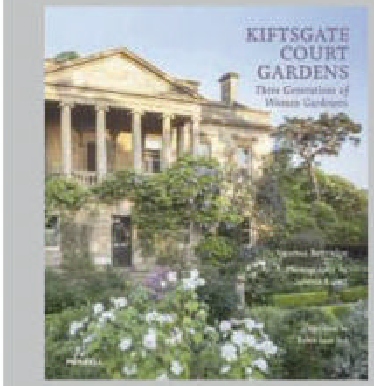
This month there's a pocket-sized herb guide, a book about people and their plants, and a new coffee-table tome.



THE PLANTHUNTER: TRUTH, BEAUTY, CHAOS AND PLANTS
by Georgina Reid,
photography by Daniel Shipp
Thames & Hudson, £28
ISBN 978-1760760236
An illustrated collection of stories from gardeners and plant lover's around the world.

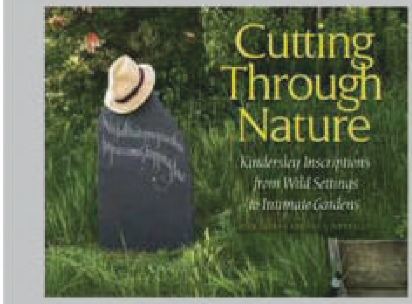


A POCKETFUL OF HERBS: AN A-Z
by Jekka McVicar
Bloomsbury, £12.99
ISBN 978-1472959478
The queen of herbs Jekka McVicar has released a mini A–Z of herbs, listing over 300 grown at Jekka's Herb Farm.



KIFTSGATE COURT GARDENS
by Vanessa Berridge,
photography by Sabina Rüber
Merrell, £40
ISBN 978-1858946696
Filled with sumptuous photography this book looks at the three generations of female gardeners at Kiftsgate Court.

THE GARDENER'S YEAR
by Pippa Greenwood
Summersdale, £9.99
ISBN 978-1786857651
A month-by-month practical to-do list with tips and tricks for keeping your plants healthy throughout the year. Plus, useful pages for jotting down ideas.



CUTTING THROUGH NATURE
by Lida Lopes Cardozo Kindersley
Cardozo Kindersley Editions, £15
ISBN 978-1874426240
The art of letter cutting is explained in detail alongside photos of commissioned work.

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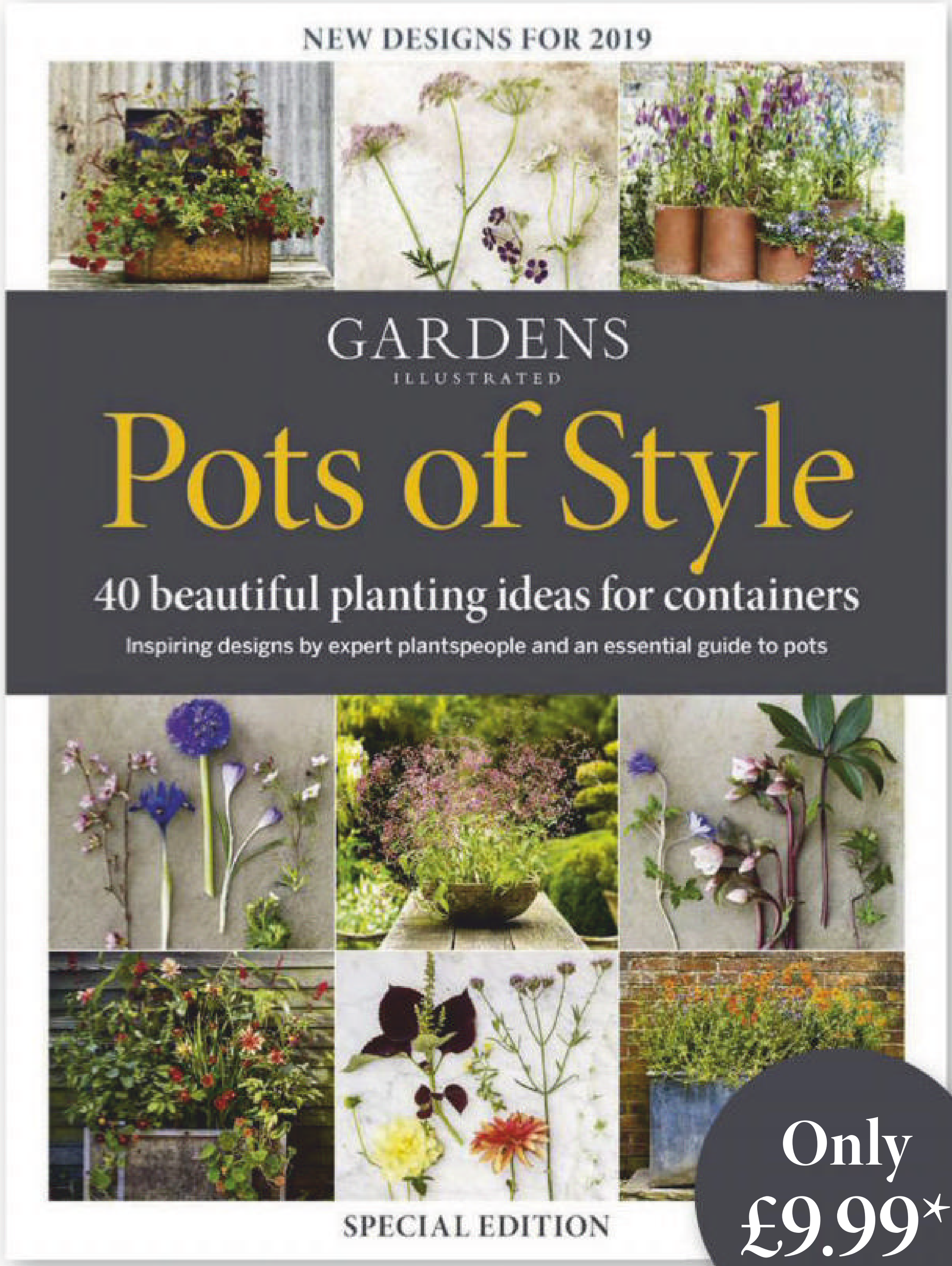
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POTS OF STYLE 2019

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Each display comes with a plant list, suggestions for containers and steps on how to achieve the look – with ideas for early spring, spring, early summer, summer and autumn into winter. You'll also find suggestions for some of the most stylish containers, the best planting kit and practical advice on how best to grow plants in pots.

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†Call charges from mobile phones are included in inclusive call packages. Outside of inclusive call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Calls from landlines will cost up to 9p per minute, depending on provider. Lines are open 8am-6pm Monday to Friday, and 9am-1pm Saturday.

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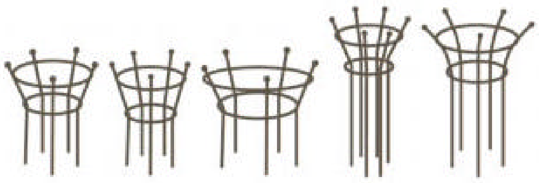

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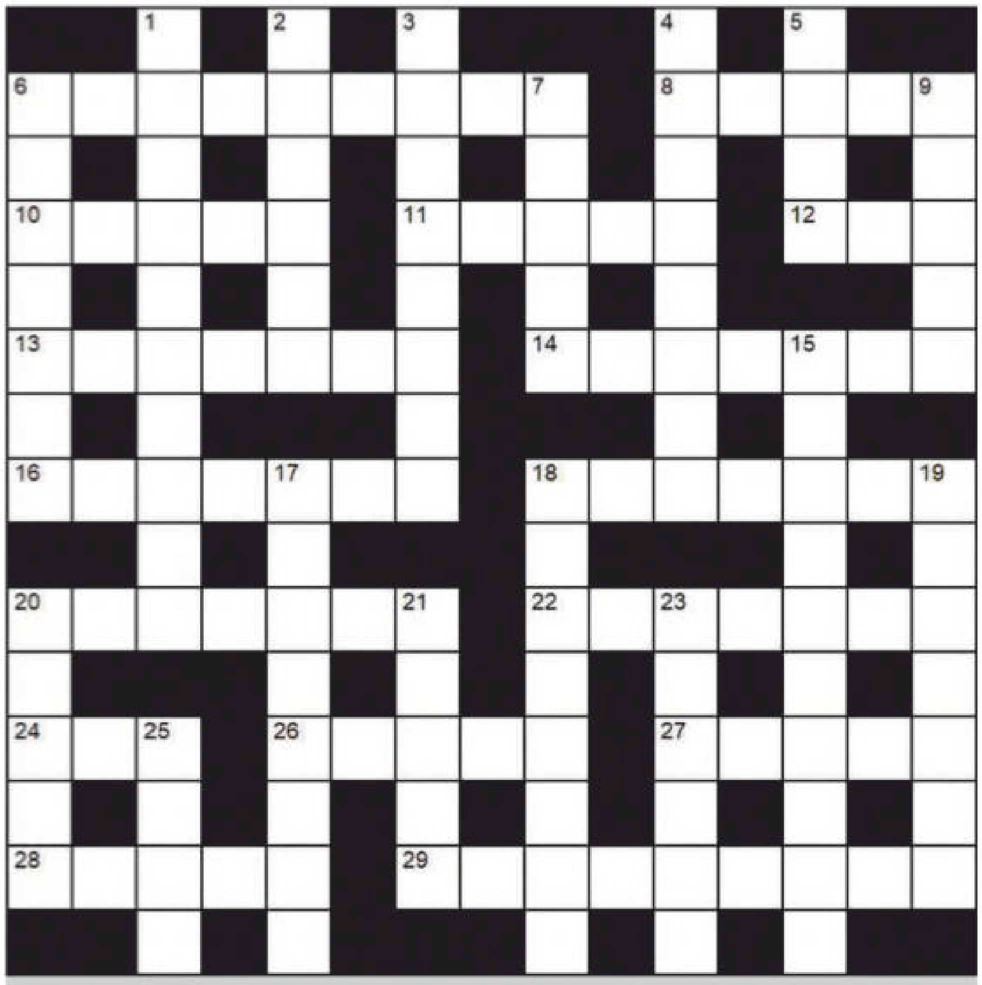
Crossword



ACROSS

6 Genus of plant commonly called bellflower (9)
8 "Its generic name is *Syringa*," I call out (5)
10 Sprout – but not a *Brassica oleracea* (5)
11 Series of vividly coloured *Mimulus* – wise men initially cultivated (5)
12 _ Balfour – the first apple picker? (3)
13 Winged seeds of *Fraxinus* tree (3,4)
14 Named sedge with green/white stripes – top of the world! (7)
16 *Bellis perennis* plants – dead if you're pushing them up! (7)
18 Cormous plant in *Iris* family – is a free sort (7)
20 A *Kniphofia* with salmon-orange flowers, and grass grown for hay (7)
22 Dandelion-like wildflower, *Hypochaeris radicata* – Tom's spike of corn? (4,3)
24 Large vase in arbour, now (3)
26 Appropriate setting for alpine plants moves to and fro (5)
27 Divided, as a clump of bulbs might be (5)
28 Cos lettuce with red-blushed leaves in thick endocarp (5)
29 Genus of pimpernel plants – all sag in a disorder (9)

DOWN

1 Genus of Chilean firebush – gets Brummie hot! (10)
2 Australian acacia's common name, hangs from turkey's neck! (6)
3 Fruit tree canker's sap secretion – I'm so smug, stupid! (8)
4 Frost damage on strawberry plants – from a blow to the face? (5,3)
5 See 23 down
6 One of England's oldest cooking apples – expense to start with (7)
7 These organisms can be a blooming nuisance on ponds, etc! (5)
9 A yellow-flowering rhododendron – at top of a hill? (5)
15 It bears white trumpet-flowers midsummer – odd tree? I'll say! (6,4)
17 Law enforcement agency's name for tall purple/black bearded iris (8)
18 Plants with generally red/purple pendulous flowers, named after German botanist (8)
19 Exposes to the action of air – as a tree, maybe? (7)
20 Thick woody plant stem – for packing clothes etc in? (5)
21 *Agave* relative that flowers each year (5)
23/5 A rosemary with deep-blue tubular flowers – uncle's tub a disaster! (6,4)
25 Pink-flowering dwarf umbrella plant – partly in an allotment (4)

Solutions to this month's crossword will be printed next month

SOLUTIONS TO FEBRUARY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Asarum **5** Blanch **10** Valerian **11** Lilium **12** Rhus **13** Tulip **14** Chef **15/27** Flower bed **17** Redhead **19** Aruncus **21** Mimosa **22** Woad **24** Spear **26** Dibble **28** Cinnamon **29** Radish **30** Azara.

DOWN 2 Staphylea **3** Reeds **4** Moister **6** Lily pad **7** Nil **8/25A** House leek **9** Inflorescence **14** Cream **16** Wound **18** Desdemona **20** Cosmeas **21** Maranta **23** Osier **25** Liana.

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What are hardiness ratings?

Hardiness ratings will help you get the best from your plants and your garden, but what exactly do they mean?

Throughout *Gardens Illustrated* are references to a plant's hardiness described using two separate scales: one from the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and the other from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Both are based on accumulated experience of a plant's ability to endure cold conditions, or in the UK, the ability to withstand changeable periods of freezing and relatively mild, wet weather. Plants adapt to tolerate cold to varying degrees. Some will take a light frost (temperatures just below freezing) for a couple of hours, others cope with long periods of freezing to remarkably low temperatures.

The USDA scale was developed in the 1960s for North America but it is now widely used in other countries around the world. It's based on minimum average temperatures in a range of zones – as shown in the two illustration below – which increase in steps of 10°F. The US zones have been mapped in remarkable detail and plants can be assigned a rating according to the coldest zone in which they can grow or, as we have done here, a range of zones in which the plant is known to grow. These range from 1 (very hardy) to 13 (least hardy), with each divided into two 5°F subzones 'a' and 'b'. This USDA system has been applied to the UK and Europe and gardeners here can use the mapped zones as a general guide.

The RHS scale, introduced in 2012, is a more descriptive system of hardiness ratings. Like the USDA system, it uses a scale (this time in 5°C steps) from H1 to H7, based on minimum winter temperatures. However, it has two major differences. The first is that it runs in the opposite direction to the USDA system – 1 is very tender, 7 is very hardy. It also offers a description for the garden conditions to help reflect the variable nature of UK winters. These are summarised in the scale below, but you can find more detailed descriptions on the RHS website. The most tender rating, H1, has been subdivided into three categories A, B and C.

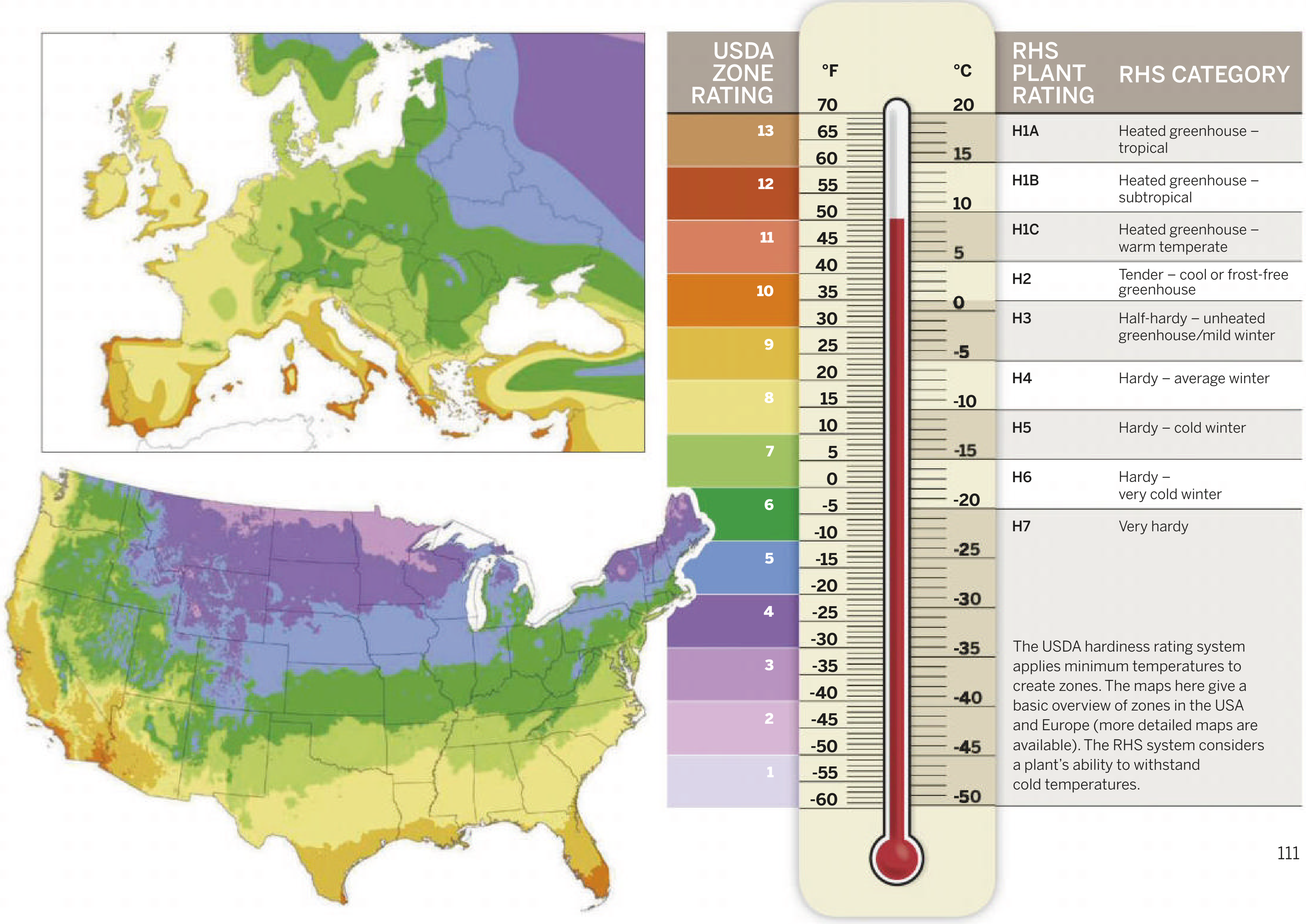
Perhaps, though, the more important difference is that the RHS scale is a rating of the plant's hardiness and hasn't been translated into mapped zones for the UK.

All rating given in the magazine are accurate to the best of our knowledge. Not every plant has been given a rating by the RHS, but where none is available our contributors will sometimes rate the plant based on their own trials. USDA scales are taken from the website of the Missouri Botanical Garden (missouribotanicalgarden.org) or based on growers' experiences in the USA. Both are included as a guide only to help you predict what you should be able to grow in your garden. ☐

This guide is based on a longer feature that appeared in issue 229 of *Gardens Illustrated* by Dr John David, head of horticultural taxonomy, and Leigh Hunt, principal horticultural advisor, at RHS Wisley. Find out more about the scales at:

RHS hardiness ratings rhs.org.uk/plants/trials-awards/award-of-garden-merit/rhs-hardiness-rating

USDA hardiness maps planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb



RHS PLANT RATING	RHS CATEGORY
H1A	Heated greenhouse – tropical
H1B	Heated greenhouse – subtropical
H1C	Heated greenhouse – warm temperate
H2	Tender – cool or frost-free greenhouse
H3	Half-hardy – unheated greenhouse/mild winter
H4	Hardy – average winter
H5	Hardy – cold winter
H6	Hardy – very cold winter
H7	Very hardy

The USDA hardiness rating system applies minimum temperatures to create zones. The maps here give a basic overview of zones in the USA and Europe (more detailed maps are available). The RHS system considers a plant's ability to withstand cold temperatures.

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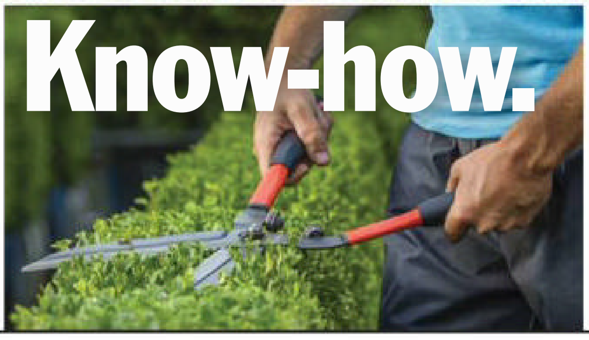

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RASPBERRIES – Summer fruiting

'Cascade Delight' An impressive new, late summer-fruiting cultivar, producing heavy crops of exceptionally large fruits that last well after picking and have an excellent sweet flavour. Shows good resistance to root rot, so more able to cope with wetter soils. The canes are only moderately spiny. Ripens early July – early August.

'Tulameen' This modern, late-summer-fruiting raspberry is now firmly established as the most widely grown cultivar on account of its fruit quality and heavy yields. The berries are very large, bright red and glossy and have an excellent, sweet, aromatic flavour. The canes have few spines and are easy to pick and manage. Ripens early July – early August.

Raspberry 'Cascade Delight'.

Raspberry 'Tulameen'.

RASPBERRIES – Autumn fruiting

'Joan J' An outstanding new, spine-free, autumn-fruiting, primocane raspberry. Superb flavour and stunning berry size (30 per cent bigger than 'Autumn Bliss') make this second to none for picking and eating. These large berries freeze exceptionally well. Ripens late July – October.

'Polka' Excellent new autumn-fruiting primocane raspberry producing large fruits with a superb aromatic flavour. Very heavy cropping, producing up to double the yield of 'Autumn Bliss '(one of its parents). Canes may not require supporting in sheltered gardens. Ripens mid July – October.

Raspberry 'Joan J'.

Raspberry 'Polka'.

STRAWBERRIES

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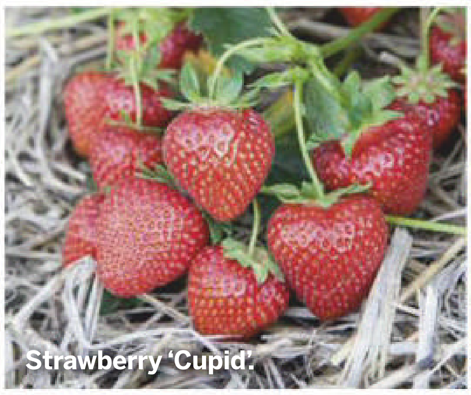
'Sweetheart' This midseason cultivar is earning a name as one of the best garden cultivars to have been released in recent years. With heavier cropping than most other main season cultivars, these berries are large, sweet and juicy with a good, old-fashioned strawberry flavour. Resistant to powdery mildew. Season: mid June – late July.


Strawberry 'Cupid'.

Strawberry 'Sweetheart'.

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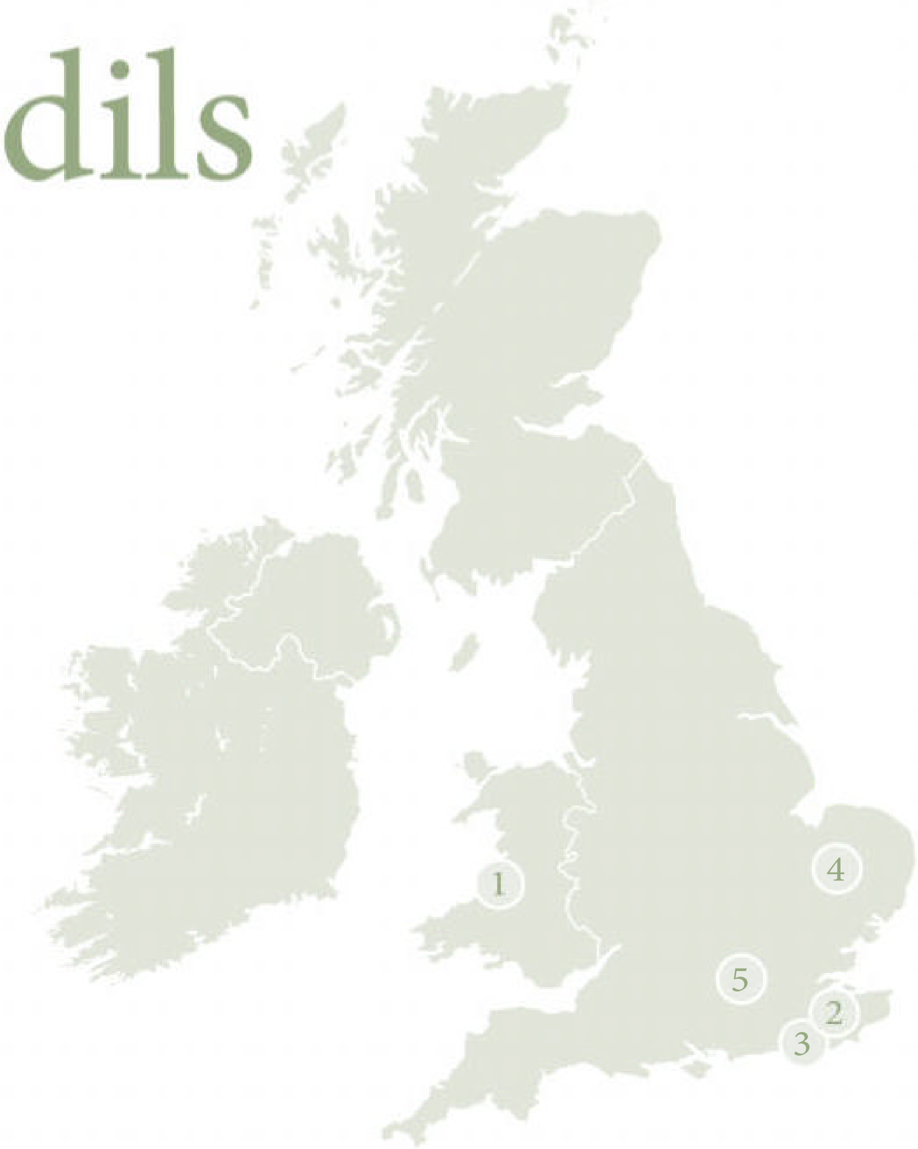
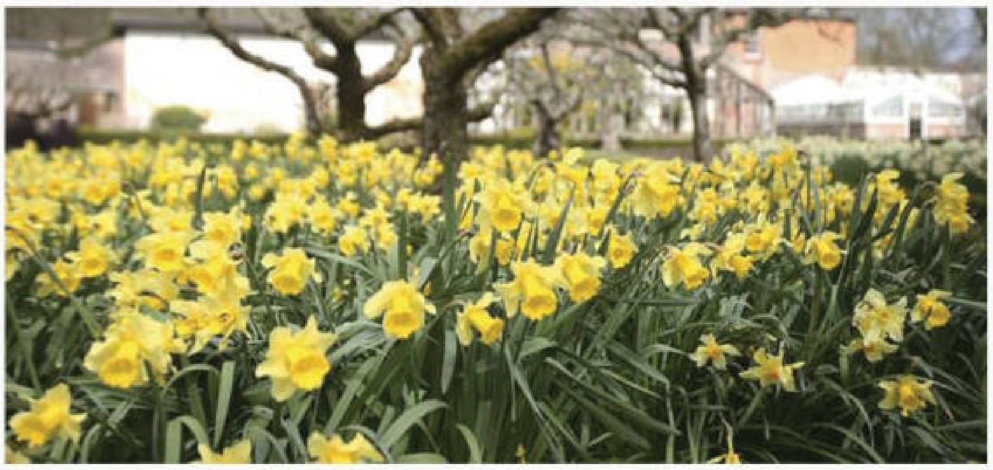
Dazzling daffodils

Enjoy the golden wonder of daffodils in these five stunning displays





1 NATIONAL TRUST, LLANERCHAERON

Bright and beautiful golden daffodils can be seen flowering in the remarkable Walled Garden and carpeting the woodland by the river at Llanerchaeron. It is worth noting that these daffodils tend to flower later in the season, around mid-March. Come and be a part of this magical moment of spring.

Near Aberaeron SA48 8DG | 01545 573024 | nationaltrust.org.uk/llanerchaeron

2 NATIONAL TRUST, SMALLHYTHE PLACE

Dazzling daffodils create weaving pathways of bright yellows and whites, mirrored on the pond's surface and flowing up through the orchards of Victorian actress, Ellen Terry's former home. A wonderful time to explore Smallhythe in its spring glory.

Tenterden, Kent TN30 7NG | 01580 762334 | nationaltrust.org.uk/smallhythe-place

3 MICHELHAM PRIORY HOUSE & GARDENS

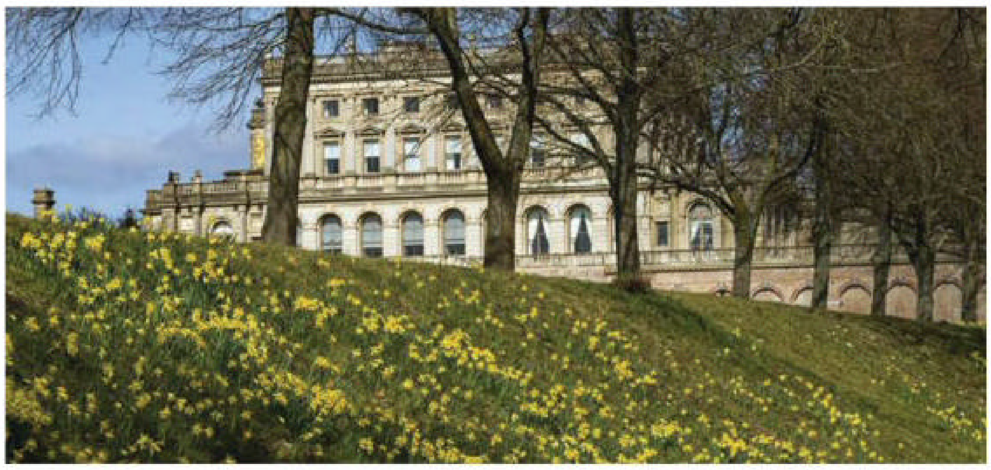
Tour the gardens and enjoy colourful carpets of daffodils, tulips, blossom and other spring flowers on this seven-acre moated island. Explore the Tudor mansion with spring flower displays throughout, working watermill and forge, plus our sculpture trail and freshly baked seasonal cakes.

Upper Dicker, Nr Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 3QS | sussexpast.co.uk

4 CHIPPENHAM PARK

With a breath-taking display of snowdrops and aconites in February followed by a succession of hellebores, scillas, cyclamen, crocus, deliciously scented daphnes and viburnums and a crescendo of daffodils and other narcissi, the gardens are at their very best in early spring. 9 Feb–31 Mar and 15–19 April.

Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5PT | 01638 721416 | chippenhamparkgardens.co.uk



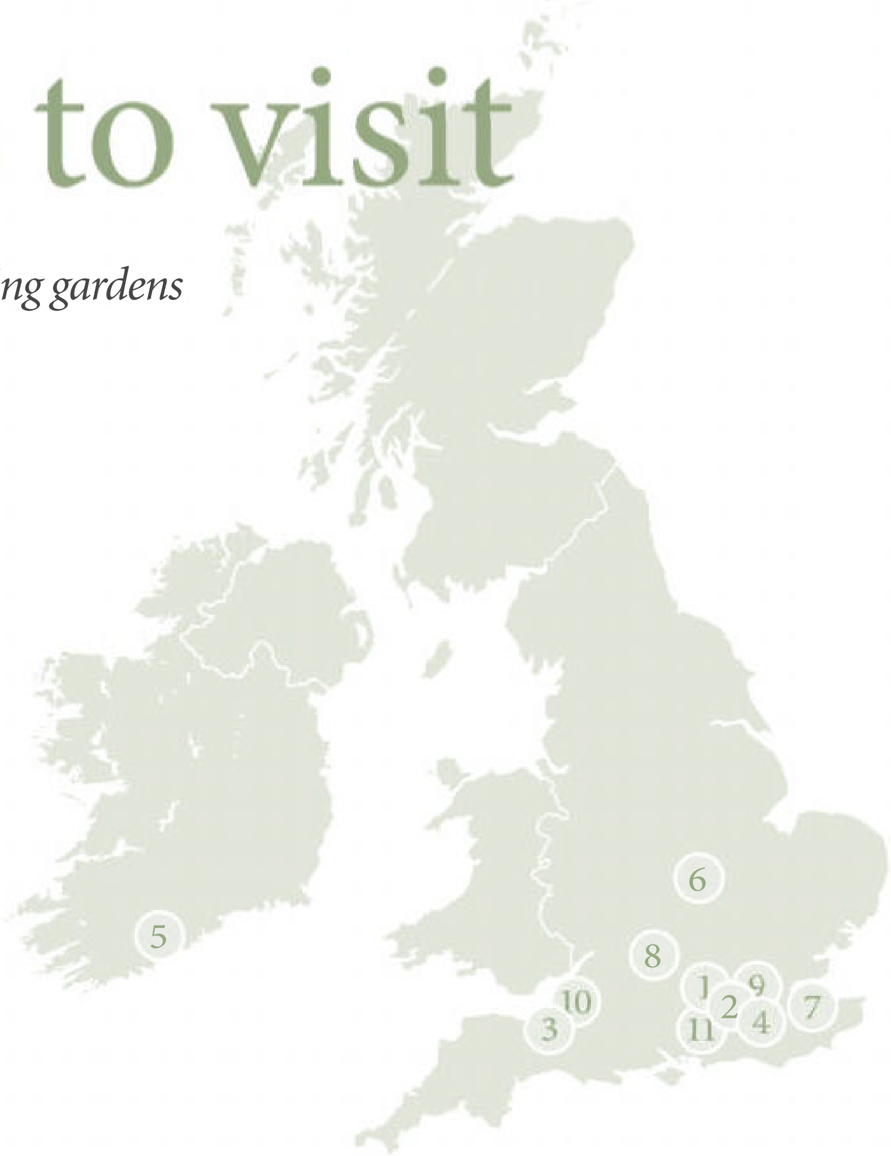
5 THE NATIONAL TRUST'S CLIVEDEN ESTATE

Experience the Gilded Gardens of Cliveden. With 57 new daffodil varieties added to the bursting Grade-I listed estate, this is a spectacle not to be missed. In Cliveden's woodlands naturalised *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* daffodils bloom to backdrop of Buckinghamshire countryside and river Thames below.

Maidenhead, Bucks SL1 8NS| 01628 605069 | nationaltrust.org.uk/cliveden

Spring gardens to visit

With spring in the air, make time to visit this collection of stunning gardens



1 EXPLORE A GARDEN WITH A ROYAL COLLECTION

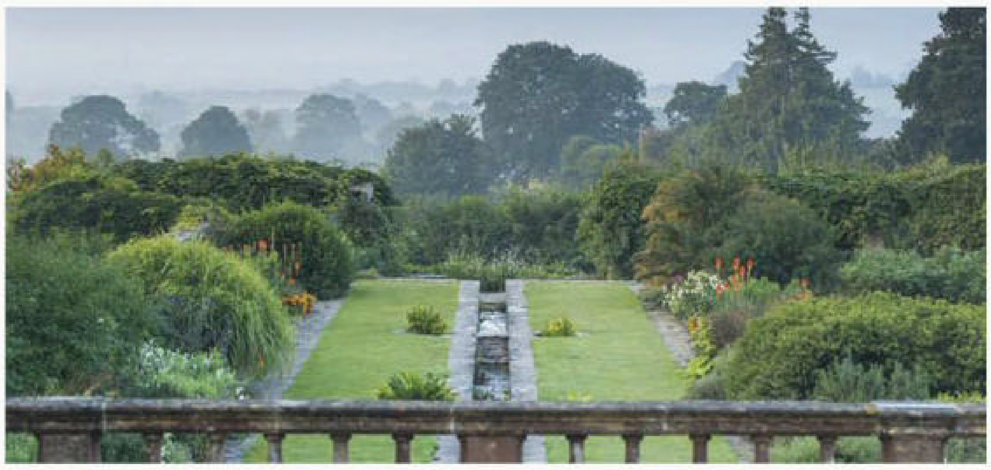
The Savill Garden is a hidden gem in the heart of Windsor Great Park. Connect with decades of royal history and admire the abundant variety of rare flowers and plants. Since its creation in the 1930s, the Garden has been an inspiration for all and a vision of gardening excellence.

Englefield Green, Surrey TW20 OUJ | windsorgreatpark.co.uk/savillgarden

2 HAM HOUSE AND GARDEN

Visit this spring, for a bulb display like no other. 500,000 spring bulbs planted in autumn form part of our re-imagining of the formal garden. The display of early flowering crocuses, then species tulips to muscari will bring vivid colour to our large lawn areas from February–April (weather permitting).

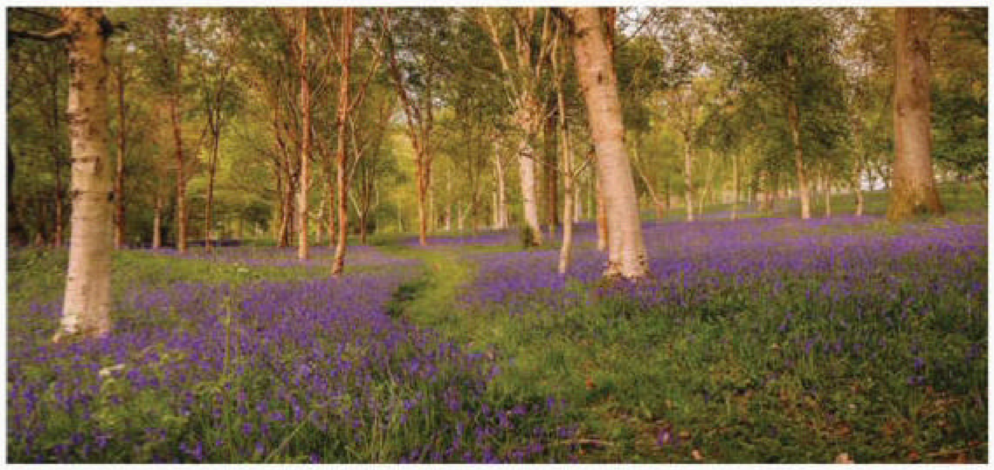
Surrey TW10 7RS | 020 8940 1950 | nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house



3 HESTERCOMBE GARDENS

Hestercombe Gardens boasts three centuries of garden design, and is one of the finest examples of the magnificent collaboration between Gertrude Jekyll and Sir Edwin Lutyens. Enjoy an afternoon tea with breathtaking views across Somerset, and a visit to their contemporary art gallery.

Taunton, Somerset TA2 8LG | 01823 413923 | info@hestercombe.com



4 WAKEHURST

Kew's wild botanic garden in Sussex, has more than 500 acres of ornamental gardens, temperate woodlands and a nature reserve. As the gardens awaken for spring enjoy vibrant rhododendrons, delicate hues in the Mansion Walled Garden and swathes of bluebells through the woodlands.

Haywards Heath, Sussex RH17 6TN | 01444 894066 | Kew.org/wakehurst

5 BLARNEY CASTLE

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Blarney, Cork, Ireland | +353 21 438 5252 | blarneycastle.ie

6

KELMARSH HALL AND GARDENS

The glorious gardens at Kelmarsh Hall are largely influenced by 20th-century tastemaker Nancy Lancaster. In early spring, daffodils and snakes head fritillaries immerse the gardens, followed by beautiful colours of alliums and tulips later in the season.

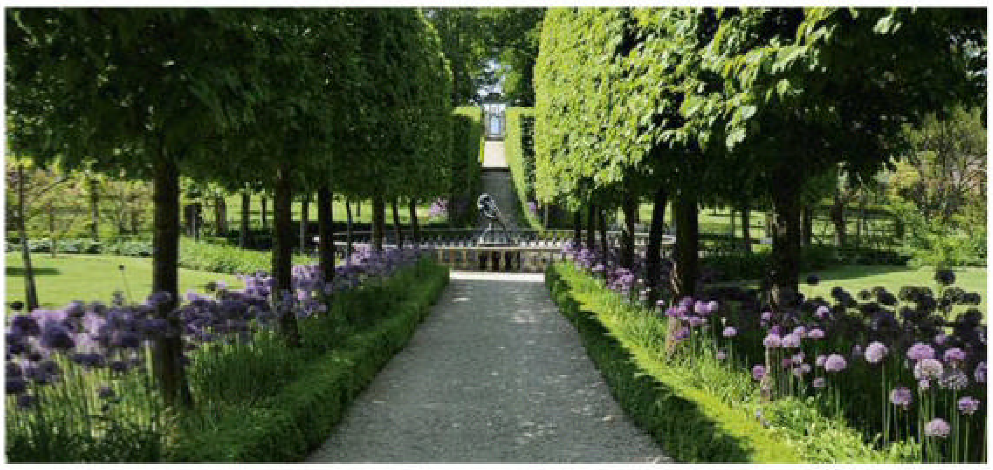
Northamptonshire, NN6 9LY | 01604 686543 | kelmarsh.com

7

BELMONT HOUSE AND GARDENS

The gardens are full of interest in every season. The Kitchen Garden was designed by Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd and has beautiful Victorian greenhouses, along with figs, hops, soft fruits and traditional apple and pear varieties. The Walled Garden's borders contain an abundance of annuals and perennials.

Faversham, Kent ME13 0HH | 01795 890202 | belmont-house.org

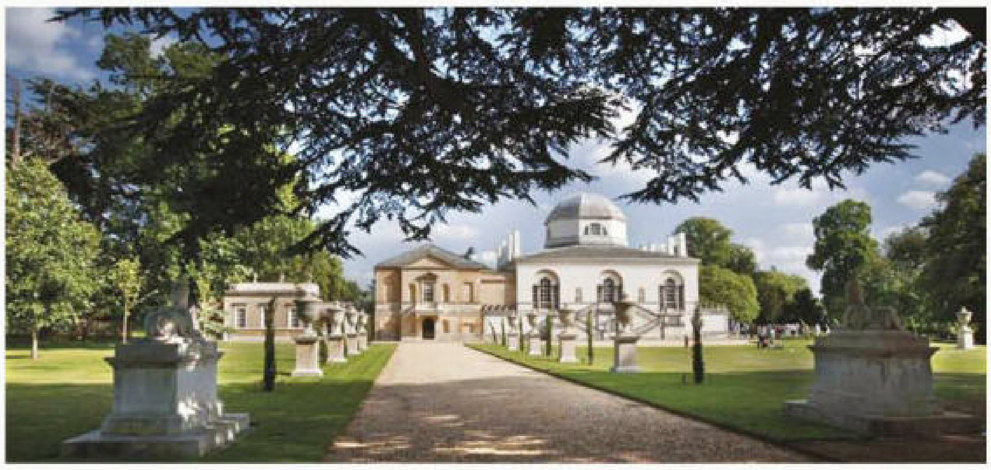


8

BUSCOT PARK

The gardens and pleasure grounds at Buscot Park are one of Oxfordshire's best kept secrets. Designed in the late 18th century the grounds were since considerably enhanced by the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Lords Faringdon. They include the spectacular water garden designed by Harold Peto and the Four Seasons Walled Garden.

Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8BU | 01367 240932 | buscotpark.com

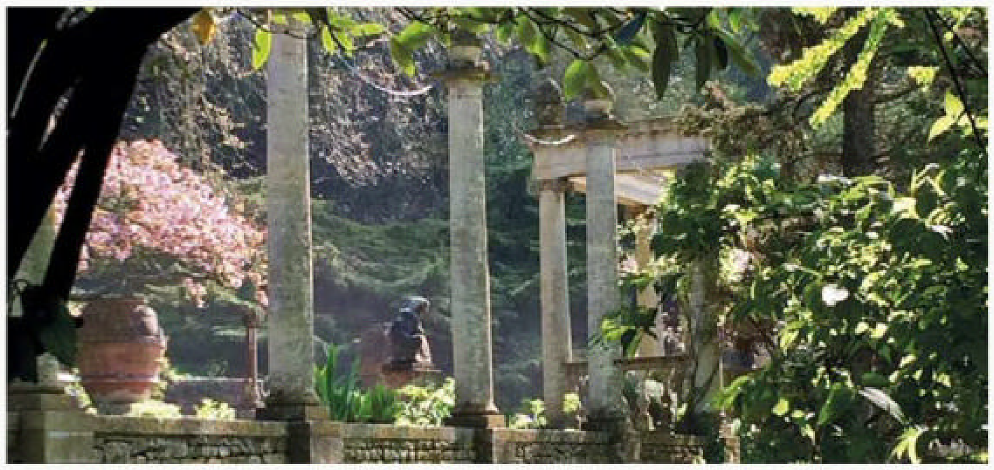


9

CHISWICK HOUSE & GARDENS TRUST

Chiswick House is one of the most glorious examples of 18th-century British architecture and its gardens are the birthplace of the English Landscape movement. Come and enjoy 65 acres of gardens, from classical vistas to ponds, cascade and an 19th-century glasshouse housing our collection of camellias.

Chiswick, W4 2QN | 020 3141 3355 | chiswickhouseandgardens.org.uk



10

IFORD MANOR

Be inspired by Harold Peto's romantic, structural garden design, complemented by cherry blossom and spring flowers. The cloud blossom canopy over the Japanese Garden, designed by current owner, is unmissable. Watch this secret garden awaken its slumber, before its famed wisteria displays burst forth in May.

Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire BA15 2BA | 01225 863146 | ifordmanor.co.uk

11

POLESDEN LACEY

Nestled within the Surrey Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty, Polesden Lacey was the party home of Edwardian socialite Margaret Greville. Visit in spring to see the stunning double herbaceous borders, swathes of yellow, cream and orange daffodils and bluebells scattered around the 1,400 acre estate.

01372 452048 | nationaltrust.org.uk/polesdenlacey

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The Gilded Gardens of The National Trust's Cliveden Estate

Set high above the Thames with far-reaching views, Cliveden's impressive gardens and majestic woodlands capture the grandeur of a bygone age.

New for spring 2019, Cliveden presents 'The Gilded Gardens of Cliveden'; a programme inspired by the golden gates on the recently conserved South Terrace and the hundreds of thousands of daffodils across the estate. Visit throughout March and April to see the spectacle unfold (full flowering is dependent on the spring weather).

A herald of spring

Golden daffodils carpet the grounds of the 376-acre gardens and woodlands. And, with over 20 different identified varieties already established throughout the grounds and a further 57 varieties added this year, The Trust is committed to preserving this British herald of spring.

Naturalised areas

This year Cliveden has increased the estate's *Narcissus pseudonarcissus* population by 5,000, the same variety of daffodil that already grows naturally in the grounds. This is a wild, native variety and can be seen scattered around the formal gardens.

Walk towards the Blenheim Pavilion and you'll see the petite and delicate *Narcissus minor*, a burst of bright yellow standing at just 15cm tall.

Head over to the oriental Water Garden where the milky-white Narcissus 'Mount Hood' grows to a regal 45cm.

A sight not to be missed is the carpet of golden daffodils reflecting the gilded gates of the Sounding Chamber as they cascade down the Eastern bank of the Parterre. A spectacle so beautiful it inspired 'The Gilded Gardens' itself.

New varieties

As well as the extended areas of already naturalised native daffodils, this year the estate is showcasing 57 new daffodil varieties, ranging vastly in scent, style and size. The new introductions, including some choice varieties, will be displayed in the South Terrace Ferneries for you to view in a new way. You'll also be able to purchase your favourite type from the gift shop to take home and enjoy year after year.

An immersive experience while respecting the daffodils

Every year we delight at seeing and smelling the irresistible daffodils we come across. However, every time we let ourselves get carried away and walk amongst them, we end up doing more harm than good. That's why Cliveden has created a self-guided walking leaflet for you to enjoy the daffodils from hard standing paths. You can pick these up free of charge from the information centre.

Cliveden has an array of varieties that will flower at different times, from February until the end of April, meaning you can visit multiple times throughout the season and be able to enjoy different flowers each time.

About the National Trust

The National Trust is a conservation charity founded in 1895 by three people who saw the importance of our nation's heritage and open spaces, and wanted to preserve them for everyone to enjoy. More than 120 years later, these values are still at the heart of everything the charity does.

Entirely independent of government, the National Trust looks after more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 778 miles of coastline and hundreds of special places across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. More than 24 million people visit every year, and together with 5 million members and over 65,000 volunteers, they help to support the charity in its work to care for special places for ever, for everyone.

Cliveden Road, Taplow, Maidenhead, Buckinghamshire SL1 8NS
01628 605 069 | cliveden@nationaltrust.org.uk
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/cliveden

The National Trust Cliveden is open every day from 10am to 5.30pm. For admission prices and a full list of opening times please see website.

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National Trust

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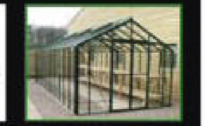

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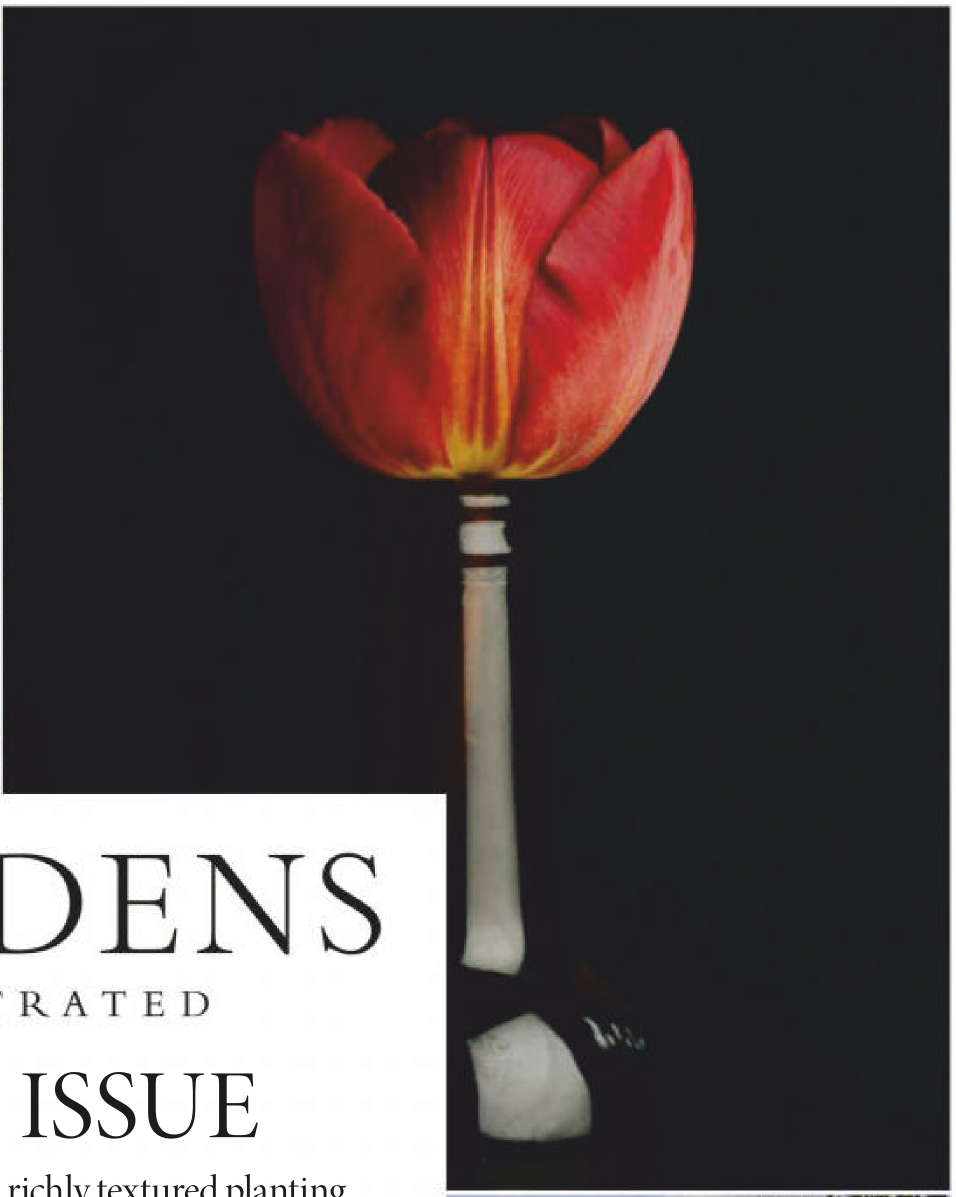

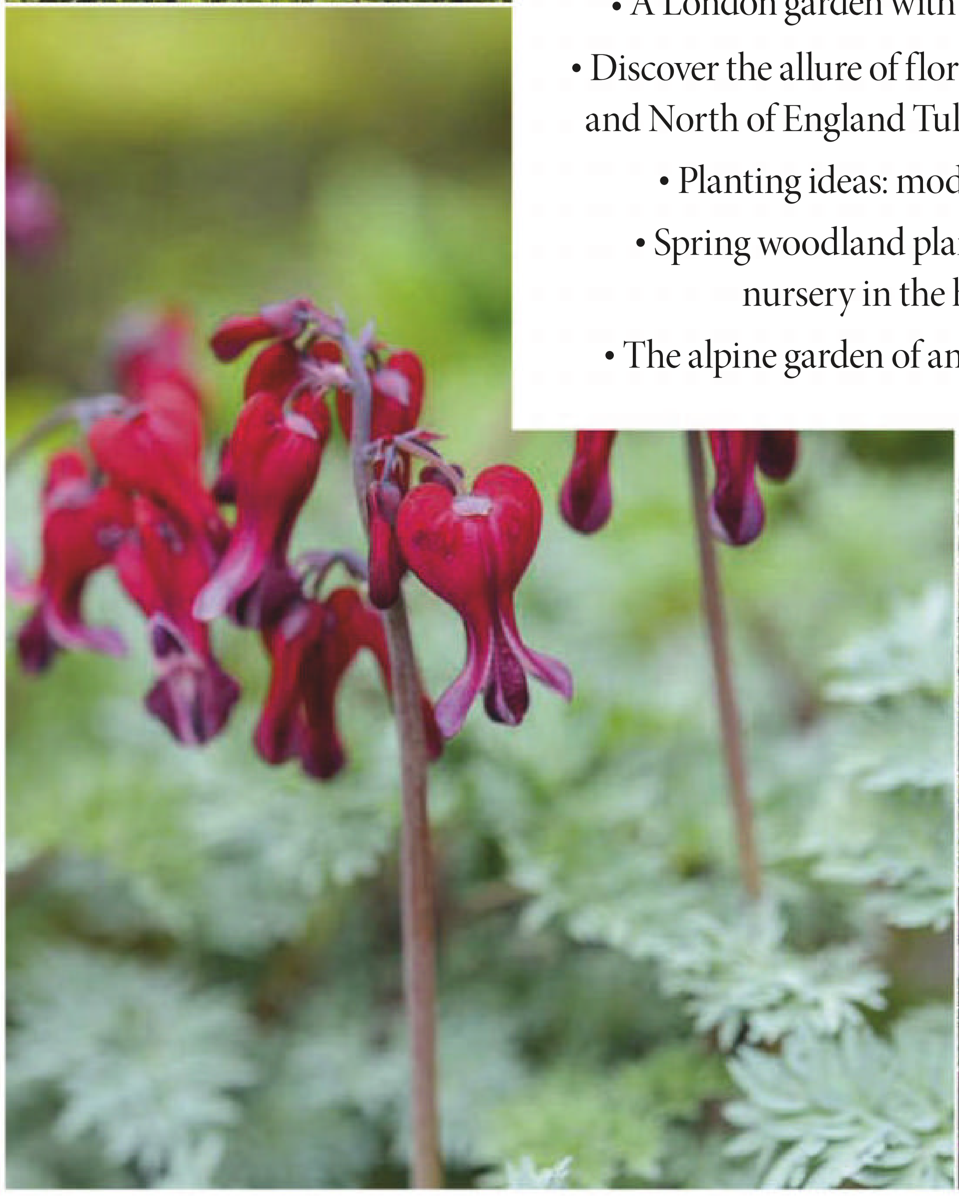

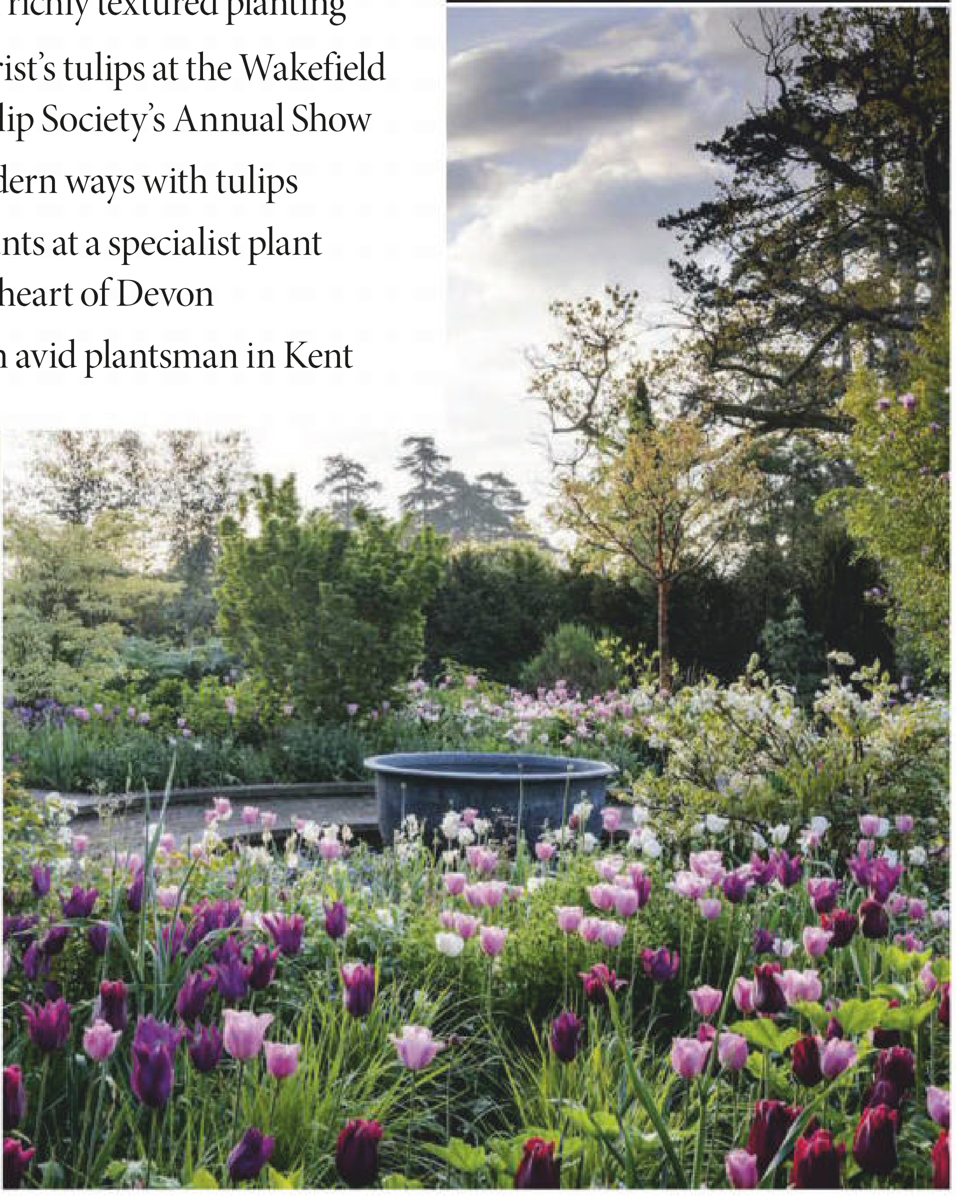

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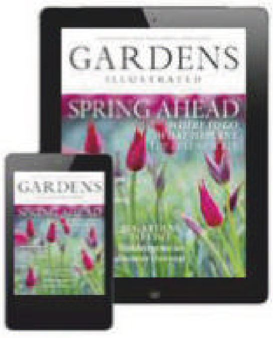

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HOUSEPLANTS

The Great Indoors

From its heyday in the 1970s, the Swiss cheese plant fell out of favour, but now the glossy foliage plant has made a comeback

WORDS **JESS SNOWBALL**
ILLUSTRATION **AGATA WIERZBICKA**

If there is one plant that has come to epitomise the current nostalgia for houseplants, it has to be the glorious Swiss cheese plant. Botanically known as *Monstera deliciosa*, this supreme foliage plant was once a feature of many a 1970s home, and four decades later it is becoming popular once more. The genus *Monstera* forms part of the aroid family, Araceae. *Monstera* are hemiepiphytic, meaning they are partly epiphytic (growing on the surface of another plant deriving its moisture and nutrients from the air), but begin life terrestrially (growing in soil) eventually scrambling up trunks of larger hosts into the understorey of the tropical canopy. Native to the tropical regions of the Americas, *Monstera* send out long, adventitious, aerial roots for support and water uptake and older specimens can survive without any contact to soil at all.

The adult leaf fenestration – the holes in the leaves – are a result of the plant's position low in the forest canopy where it receives very little light. With these holes, the leaves can spread out covering huge areas where they are more able to catch sunflecks of unpredictable light. The holes also allow precipitation to pass through to the roots. Without holes, the vast leaves would act as umbrellas and roots could be left dry.

Swiss cheese plants make fantastic, dependable house plants. They will forgive a lot, including being constantly moved around, sporadic and minimal watering and, in particular, lower light and humidity levels. They also will adapt impressively to where light can be found, growing in the most unusual ways and fast. Physically they are huge and so will immediately transform an indoor space and create an immersive jungle atmosphere.

When I moved into my first house in London, I was welcomed by a large yucca and a Swiss cheese plant that had been left behind by the previous tenant. Initially dejected and dusty – after some love and care that included a repot, staking and feed – the cheese plant now thrives on top of a wardrobe to the side of a small south facing window. Up high on a large shelf or on top of a cabinet in bright light and little direct sunlight, is the perfect spot to display *Monstera*, to show off their famously big leaves. They grow absolutely enormous and, unless properly supported, staked or trained, can topple over as they grow towards light.

If space, or the lack of it, is an issue or you want permanently to grow your *Monstera* on a shelf, then you may want to consider *Monstera adansonii* instead. Known as the Philodendron monkey mask, *Monstera adansonii* is the smaller cousin of *M. deliciosa*, so it needs much less space. The leaves are thinner and oval and because it has more shoots and stems, it more forgiving of inexperienced pruning. Another plant to look out for is *M. deliciosa* 'Variegata', the much sought-out variegated cultivar, with striking, variable, marble white markings. The range of these markings depends on the individual plant.

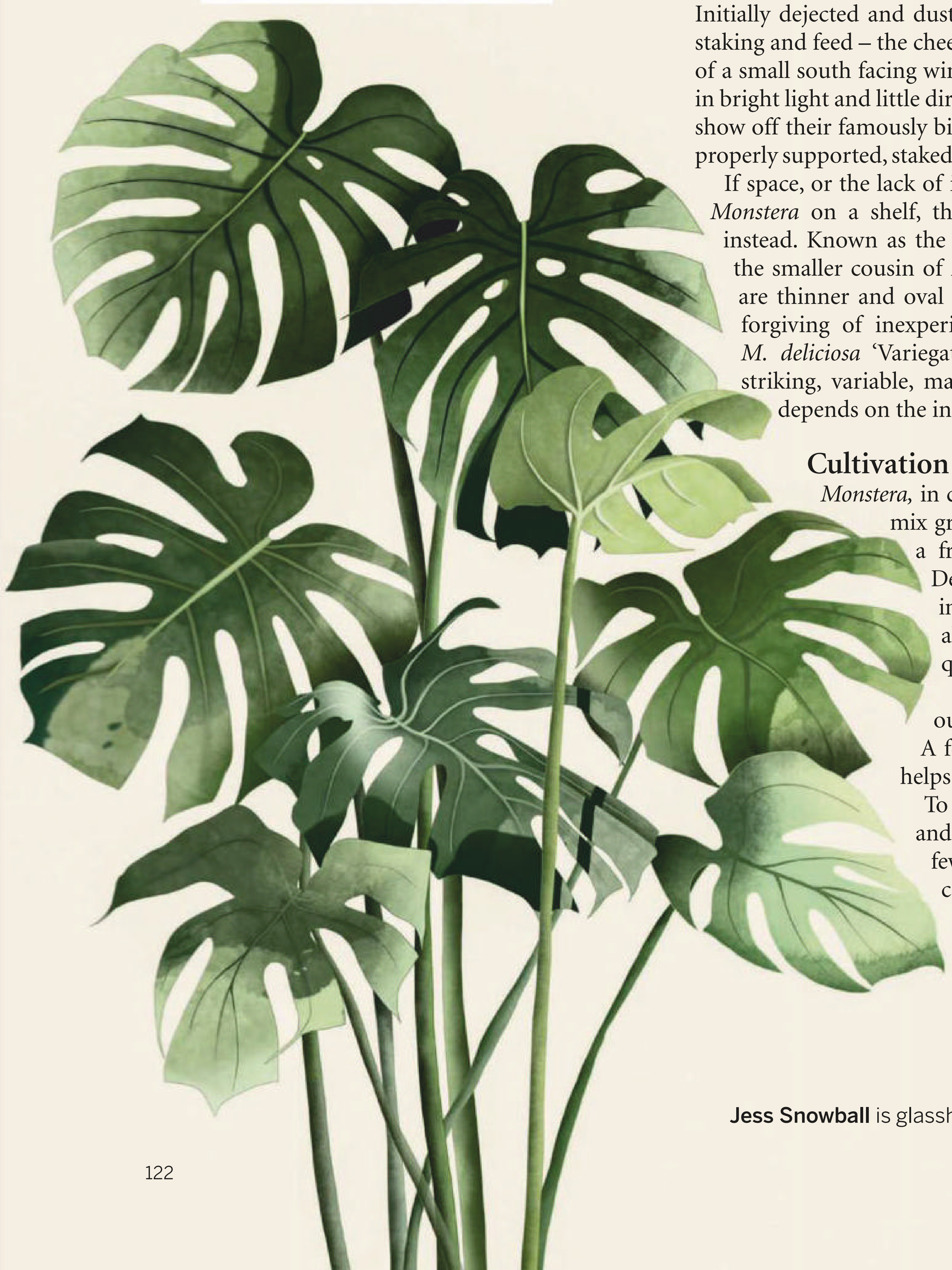
Cultivation

Monstera, in common with most aroids, like a free-draining, open-mix growing medium, such as bark, charcoal or pumice, or a free-draining, well-aerated, peat alternative compost. Despite being native to the tropics *Monstera* will thrive in very low humidity and will tolerate a shadier spot although they grow more dramatically and much more quickly in brighter light.

Water regularly, enough to keep the soil from drying out, although *Monstera* will tolerate periods of drought. A feed every two to three weeks in spring and summer helps keep the leaves from becoming chlorotic.

To propagate, cut away a tip shoot consisting of two leaves and place it in a jar of water on a bright windowsill. In a few weeks watch some new roots appear and the cutting can be potted on. ☐

MONSTERA DELICIOSA



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Jess Snowball is glasshouse manager at the Chelsea Physic Garden, London.

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